

CORPORATIONS AND OPERATIVES:

BEING AN EXPOSITION OF THE CONDITION

OF

FACTORY OPERATIVES,

AND A REVIEW OF THE

“VINDICATION,”

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BY A CITIZEN OF LOWELL.

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P R E F A C E.

The following pages contain, in substance, the matter that appeared during the summer of 1841, in a series of articles, in the "Vox Populi," a weekly newspaper published at Lowell. They were hastily prepared amidst a pressure of business matters. The writer makes no pretensions to literary honors, and did not attempt a work to stand the test of *literary* criticism. He trusted to nothing but the truth, and justice of his statements, to recommend it to the attention of the community. He was excited to the work by a deep sense of the importance of the public mind being informed correctly as to the condition of the operative portion of the population of our manufacturing villages. His object was to awaken the minds of the community, and especially the operatives themselves, to an *enquiry* into the real nature and *tendency* of the factory system, as it now exists. He expected no other use would be made of the thoughts he then published, than to be casually read, and thrown aside, and forgotten. But he did *hope*, the importance of the subject would make an impression upon *some minds*, which would arouse them to some action, that might in time lead to results, beneficial to the hard working operatives in our mills.

Recent events have occurred, which have awakened an inquiry among the operatives, as to what the *Rights* of humanity demand. The late reduction of wages has withdrawn the veil, that has been spread over the factory system, and the operatives have opened their eyes, and with surprise behold the true characters of the agents and managers of the mills, who have been pretending so much *kindness* and *fatherly* regard for them. They now behold them, as they really are at all times, the paid agents of the hard hearted money changers, and a gold-worshipping and poverty-oppressing aristocracy. And they have now become impressed with the truth and importance of the matters contained in these pages; and it is at their urgent request, that the writer has consented to their republication. If anything that he *has* done, or *may* do, can be of any service in rendering their condition better, his labors will be amply repaid, by the consciousness of the fact.

The author consents, the more readily to this republication, from the fact, that as the manufacturing population increases in New England, (and it is a rapidly increasing portion of the community,) the oppression of the corporations, as the employing party, becomes more marked; and they take bolder strides toward exercising an absolute and degrading despotism over those, to whom they *condescend* to give employment.

The form of a pamphlet he prefers, as it will thereby attain a wider circulation (and consequently do more good,) than it could attain in a newspaper, divided as it must needs be into many numbers.

The author has revised the work as hastily, as he originally prepared it, — and the fact will account for any errors or faults, that undoubtedly will appear.

THE AUTHOR.

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CORPORATIONS AND OPERATIVES.

In order to understand the true state and condition of a manufacturing population, under our present factory system, it is necessary to carefully examine the interests of the different parties, concerned in the enterprise, whether they be *proprietors* or *operatives*, —and to analize their real motives in the parts they perform. In the remarks, I shall find it necessary to make in the course of this work, I shall speak particularly of Lowell and its inhabitants; and for the reasons, that it is emphatically *the* manufacturing city of the new world, and that the writer, by a residence here of some ten years, is enabled to give the results of his own observations in relation to matters as they exist in Lowell; but I believe the statements that will be made, will apply with equal truth, to all manufacturing villages of any considerable importance, in New England;—and this, I would have the reader bear in mind *throughout*.

There are two, distinct, leading interests lying at the bottom of things in this city. The one, is the interest of the combined wealth of the Corporations, and the other, is the interest of the great mass of the People, living in Lowell, but who receive no share of the large dividends, made by the manufacturing establishments. These may be properly denominated, the former, the "non-resident interest," and the latter, the "resident interest." The persons interested, are on the first part, wealthy individuals, the owners of the stock, who reside in Boston and New York, or some place, other than Lowell. On the other part, are the people of Lowell, male and female, who live here, and whose labor and exertions here support *themselves*, and furnish large dividends to the *non resident stock-holders*. These interests are *sometimes* concurrent, but *generally* opponent.

I espouse the interest of the People, as distinguished from the interest of the Corporations. I advocate the cause of the laboring

men and women—the residents of Lowell. I am one of them,—and with them, are all my sympathies;—and as I contend in their cause, my motto shall be, “**JUStICE, TRUTH AND EQUAL RIGHTS.**” I desire their elevation to that station in the social scale, to which their usefulness entitles them; and in their name, I demand that such improvements be made in their situation and condition, as shall secure to them, their just share of the products of their own labor. And in order to the accomplishment of this object, I ask them to hear me, while I speak the truth—naked, plain, and simple, although they may sometimes deem it, rugged, harsh, and unpleasant. And I would here warn them to heware of deception in its thousand shapes. And above all, I conjure them, to dash from their lips, the cup of nauseous flattery, prepared for them by the paid servants of an interested aristocracy, by a pensioned press, and a bought priesthood. The truth, although, like the healing draught of the skilful physician, it may be sometimes disagreeable to the taste, is nevertheless more wholesome, than the more pleasant and tempting preparations, that falsehood and misrepresentation may offer.

I make these preliminary remarks in consequence of the efforts that have been made, and especially, within the last few months, to give as I believe, a perverted and deceptive impression of the condition of the “operatives in the mills.” The motives for deception, and the means used, will be noticed in due course.

That there are evils existing here, even the “Vindicator of the character and condition of the Lowell Females” admits. Let us then, come out and fearlessly examine what and where they are, and publish them, so that the public may understand them, and demand their correction.

This I purpose to do; although it may be deemed a thankless task, to labor thus for those, who had rather kiss their chains, and admire the glittering tinsel and finery with which their iron links are concealed, than declare their wrongs, and stand forth, and show their shackles, that they may be struck from their already palsying limbs. I shall go on, not expecting to escape the penalty that has ever been visited upon my predecessors, who have dared to tread upon this ground, the frowns and curish growlings of those interested, seconded by the feebler yelpings of their dupes, the *deceived among the sufferers.*

Let me in the first place, put the question to every candid mind

in the community, whether those, who do the labor that produces the wealth, that is here created, receive, as a compensation for their labor, their just proportion of the profits, according to the sweat, and toil, and time by them contributed to the enterprise? And in the next place,—Is the moral, intellectual, and physical condition of the operatives in the mills, such as well-informed persons would wish their children to be in? To answer these questions, let me ask one more,—Is their situation, and are the influences that surround them such, as the rich stock-holders, and their agents and superintendents would have their sons and their daughters placed in, and subjected to? Certainly such a question, it is idle to ask. Every one *knows*, that the condition of factory operatives would be considered a degradation, to which those persons would not suffer their children to descend. It would be considered a damning disgrace to the family, and a stain upon their fancied aristocracy for one of them even to associate, *in any manner*, with a factory operative. Now such a state of things is certainly wrong. The operatives in the mills render vastly more to the well being of the community, than thousands, who look upon them with disdain. Then why should they not receive such compensation, and be placed in such circumstances as would give them a *place in society*, commensurate with the service they *render to society*. Do they receive such compensation? Do such circumstances surround them? Is their grade and standing in society, in any respect, considered equal to the worthless,—nay worse than worthless drones, the children of those who fatten upon *their* toil and blood?

Are these things so, is the question—not whether they *ought* to be *so*.

No one will at this day deny, that every one, whatever his station may be, should receive due honor, according to what he may render to the well being of society. "The *workman* is worthy of his hire," is the doctrine, the divine teacher, Christ declared to his disciples and through them, to the world. The old theory, that the many should labor, that a few may roll in idleness and luxurious ease, was long ago exploded. And the doctrine, that every one is entitled to honor and distinction, according to the *merits of his acts*, was established by the voice and blood of the patriots of the revolution.

Far be it from me, to say a word to degrade the character of that

class of persons of which I speak. I seek to exalt their condition, to that station they truly merit, but from which, they are now most unjustly excluded. Should I say that no stigma rests upon the character of the factory operatives, especially the female portion of them—that they hold a position in society on a level with others, no more useful to society than themselves, I should say that which every one, at all conversant with the true state of things, would feel in his soul,—would *know* to be *false*. Such misrepresentation and downright falsehood would do them no good;—it might indeed flatter the vanity of some, thereby blinding their eyes to the true estimation in which they are held, and deter them from taking suitable measures for demanding their rights.

In order that they may maintain their proper station in society and command due respect, they must keep pace with those, in other situations, in their advancement in physical, social, intellectual, and moral improvement. And in order that they may advance, time and opportunities must be provided. Such provisions are not made to a sufficient extent. The operatives in the factories, instead of advancing, do certainly retrograde in some points, and it is thought by many, that *taking the factory operatives as a whole*, they do deteriorate in all the points above mentioned. They certainly have not the time or the opportunity to make very rapid advances in knowledge, or morals, as every one must know who pays any regard to the true situation of factory operatives. On this supposition alone, can be accounted for, that estimation prejudicial to their characters, which, whether just or unjust, and whatever may be said to the contrary, does exist in the minds of the community, that although they merit a better fate, yet in consequence of the circumstances, in which they are placed, and the influences thrown around them, those qualities which always must *command* respect, become in a measure tarnished and bedimmed. If this be the case, *they* ought not to receive censure. Let the blame fall where it justly belongs, upon the overweening avarice of those who live in splendor on the earnings of these wronged sufferers of reproach. And let the voice of the people be heard in their behalf, not to flatter them, that they may bear their burdens with patience and suffer in silence, but to demand that their wrongs may be redressed, and that such reforms may be made in their condition, as will ensure to them, *in reality*

and truth, that honorable standing in society, which honest industry should always enjoy.

Anticipating then, for my pains, the frowns of very many of that same class of persons, for whose benefit and true welfare I labor, I shall proceed to give a plain and unvarnished statement of the condition of the operatives in the Lowell Factories, noticing those circumstances and influences, which are peculiar to a manufacturing population. My aim is to subserve the cause of humanity, and promote the best interests of the laboring men and women, of whom this community is principally composed. I would say nothing in the captious spirit of fault-finding;—I would “nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice;” I would give an account of things as they are, in the language of truth and justice. And if any thing should be said that may wound the feelings of any one, or which may be considered prejudicial to the character of any person or class of persons, I would have it distinctly understood, that the writer is incapable of intending any injury to that useful portion of this community, whose condition he proposes to consider. So far from it, his direct aim is, to benefit the condition of that class of individuals, by exposing the evils of their situation and calling upon the community to correct them. He will make an exposition of *facts*,—and if there be any, whose feelings may be injured by those facts being made public, let them remember that the writer does not cause those facts to exist;—and let them remember that the truth, however unpleasant it may be to some individuals, should never be suppressed when the great cause of humanity demands its publication.

The amount of good and evil, that is lost and gained by the persons, who gather here from all quarters and from most all grades and conditions in society, to work in the factories, cannot be accurately weighed and measured; nor can even an approximate estimate be made. All calculations based upon certain ascertained data, must be very wide from the truth, unless qualified by many unascertainable facts that are peculiar to a place like Lowell.

I shall therefore plainly and briefly notice the peculiar circumstances in which the operatives are placed, and ask all persons to use their own judgment, guided by their experience of the immutable laws of cause and effect, as to what *must* be their results upon their morals, intellect, health and general well-being.

In the first place, I would notice the bringing together of so

many females, and their being compelled to board together in large and crowded families. This of itself I believe to be a great evil.

There are congregated together here some eight thousand females more or less,—for the most part between the ages of fifteen and thirty, the greater part of them having come from among the farmers of this and the neighboring States. These girls, coming as they do from the various grades of society in the country, differ widely in their education and moral culture; but the *greater* portion of them, like the daughters of New England farmers generally, have been respectably educated, and have been well instructed in the strict morality, so common to the character of that worthy portion of the community. But they come here unschooled in the crooked ways of the world, and ignorant of the deceptive arts and false appearances that vice puts on. Among the thousands thus collected here from all quarters, notwithstanding the strictest scrutiny may be observed, there must unavoidably be some vicious persons, but who from necessity show an *outside garb* of purity. Those who come here from the country, being obliged by the “regulations,” or if not, for the most part driven by necessity to board in the Corporation Boarding-Houses,* where are crowded together in one family from thirty to forty persons, being entire strangers perhaps to all, must of necessity form a promiscuous companionship with those, whose former characters they have no means of knowing. Pleased with the novelty of their new life, and with an ever active curiosity, now newly excited, they are of course anxious to learn the ways and customs of their new situation. They are away from the care and watchfulness of parental love, upon which they have always relied for counsel,—they are in the midst of strangers;—and artless and unsuspecting, they naturally look to their new associates for examples

* It is probably well known to most persons that the regulations of most, if not all the Corporations require the operatives in the mills to board in houses belonging to the Corporations. At about the time that these articles first appeared, it was denied by the defenders and apologists of the Corporations that these regulations were any thing more than a *dead letter*, as it was not attempted to enforce them. But lately the operatives are compelled to board in the Corporation houses or submit to a loss; the Corporations taking the privilege of paying a part of their board to the keepers of their boarding houses, which of course, they make up by a corresponding reduction of wages.

and instruction. As too often happens, they at last discover, that the friends to whom they have trusted, have led them unwittingly astray.

Such evil, to a greater or less extent, must result from the indiscriminate congregating in large families, of so many inexperienced females, away from the protecting care of their parents and friends.

It may be said that the care and restraint, exercised by the keepers of the boarding houses, over their respective families, is sufficiently salutary to guard them against all evils. This would undoubtedly be true, if they lived in small families; but what can be expected from the head of a family of fifty persons, by the way of that parental care and counsel, that is so much needed, over their general conduct and moral culture. Their time must necessarily be employed, in providing for the bodily necessities of their boarders.

Another evil consequence of condensing the operatives into so small a space, by compelling them to board so many in one family, is, that they are thereby deprived of the opportunities for quiet, undisturbed reflection, so important to the moral and intellectual improvement of the mind. "Retire to thy closet" was the instruction of Christ to his disciples. This precept of the Master, all should remember, and practice. Solitude teaches many useful lessons. Its influence is purifying and sanctifying. When we are in its solemn presence, the soul retires within itself; we turn our eyes within and nothing can then escape the involuntary, searching gaze of our own consciences. Every action, every word, and every thought is brought to judgment and weighed in the balance of exact justice. The sentence of condemnation on all that is wrong, cannot then be avoided. Conscience, thunder-toned then speaks. It is then we feel remorse for past errors, and in the stillness of solitude, make solemn resolutions of repentance. The operatives who board in the Corporation boarding-houses, do not enjoy the opportunities for this necessary retirement. They have no time nor place to sing, in the sweet strain of the poet:

Hail, mildly, pleasing Solitude,
Companion of the wise and good,
But, from whose holy, piercing eye,
The herd of fools and villains fly.

Their minds are eternally confused in the endless bustle, and noise, and gabble, that is continually going on around them, and from which they cannot without inconvenience escape.

The want of these times and opportunities for reflection, which persons in all other situations in life have, must have a tendency to induce levity and a thoughtless state of mind, unfavorable to moral and intellectual improvement.

Another evil that should be noticed, is the short time allowed the operatives for their meals. After allowing them sufficient time to go from the mills to their boarding houses and back again, they have, with the exception of the time allowed during summer, for dinner, but about fifteen minutes in which to eat. This is not sufficient time for them to properly masticate a sufficient quantity of food for the healthful support of life; and they must either eat less than is necessary, or it must go into their stomachs in a state unfit for the nourishment of the body. Hence to gain another minute at the table, they are obliged to hurry to and from their meals, more like a herd of cattle than like human beings.

Another, and a great evil, that exists in the condition of the factory operatives, is the crowded state of their sleeping apartments. There are in the boarding houses three, four, and sometimes it is said more beds, stowed into one room; and here six, eight, or more persons are obliged to sleep, inhaling and re-inhaling the same air, thereby made poisonous and deleterious to health. There is no need of words to show the injurious effect of this. Every one must understand the pernicious and destructive effect, of so many persons sleeping in the same room, and breathing the same air. In view of this fact alone, it is no wonder that the bloom of health, with which they come here, fades from the cheeks of so many females after working in the factories a short time.

This is a matter of absolute cruelty to the hard working operatives in our mills, and should no longer be tolerated. There is no class of persons in the U. States, that suffer so severely in this respect—not even the slaves of the South.

Another item, in relation to the condition of the Factory operatives, worthy of the serious consideration of the community, is the price paid by the females for board. This is regulated by the corporations, and of course is fixed as low as will merely afford to the operatives, a bare subsistence, and enable the Boarding-house keepers, with the strictest economy, to live and pay their bills; and this they have not always been able to do, as is well known to the citizens of Lowell generally, and as the grocers, butchers and bakers

have too often known to their cost. Although the girls nominally pay their own board, it is for the interest of the corporations, that the price of board should be as low as possible, for the lower the price of board is, the lower can a sufficient number of hands be procured. Hence it is, that the corporations undertake to dictate as to the price of board, (instead of letting it regulate itself, like all other matters,) which is *in fact* dictating to the operatives, what they shall eat and drink, and how comfortably they may be lodged,—at any rate so far as to say, that they shall have no better food or lodging than the scanty pittance they allow, will provide. Every thing, that is paid for the comfort and convenience of the *operatives*, is considered as being *robbed* from the “poor widows and orphans,” the rich stock-holders, to squander in furnishing a *comfortable* living to “factory girls.”

The price of board for girls is limited in the corporation Boarding-houses, to \$1, 37 1-2 cents per week.* Those, who have been in a position to know any thing about the expense of house-keeping, as the prices of all kinds of provisions have been, can judge for themselves, what kind of food and how comfortable accommodations can be afforded for that price.

There has always been much complaint about the “*living*” in the corporation Boarding-houses; and the answer to such complaints has ever been, that “it is as good as can be furnished for the price paid.” And the justness of this remark has generally silenced all complaints. And it certainly seems to me that one dollar and thirty-seven and a half cents per week, after paying other necessary expenses, such as rent, fuel, washing, &c. will not buy a sufficient quantity of good, wholesome food, for the subsistence of a laboring person. For the *drones*, who curl their lips in contempt of honest labor, and drag out a life of indolence, it may be sufficient, and more

* The price of board was first fixed by the Corporations at *one dollar and twenty-five cents*, per week; at which price it continued, till about the year 1836 or 1837; when, after a great many of the boarding-house keepers had lost what little they had before, and become bankrupt, in consequence of the rise of provisions, that took place about that time, the board was raised, *twelve and a half cents* per week; and *one dollar and thirty-seven and a half cents* was the price of board at the time these statements were first published; but some months since the price was reduced to *one dollar and twenty-five cents*, to which price it is still restricted.

than justice would accord them. But the industrious, laboring factory operatives should be better provided for.

Some of the evils already noticed may be attributed to the low price of board; and there are some others arising from the same cause, that we shall here mention.

The price of board being so low, the keepers of the Boarding-houses, in order to a living, are obliged to crowd the greatest possible number into one tenement, and of course cannot furnish them with so comfortable accommodations as they should have.

On account of the crowded state of the houses, if a girl has a friend, a brother or a sister call to see her, with whom she has some of their own private affairs to talk over, there is no opportunity in the house to avoid the inquisitiveness of the throng. Hence they are often seen standing in the entries and at the doors, and often unprotected from the inclemency of the weather. This circumstance should be weighed as it regards its effects upon the social condition, as well as upon the health of the operatives.

Again, the keepers of the Boarding-houses cannot pay that attention to neatness and cleanliness in their rooms that is so desirable and necessary to the preservation of health. Especially is this the case with respect to the beds and sleeping apartments. These, from unavoidable neglect, are often overrun with uncomfortable and filthy vermin, to the great annoyance of the poor, suffering lodgers. However unpleasant to the feelings and nice sensibilities of some, this exposure may be, it is a fact that should be known, as a circumstance showing what provision is made for the comfort of factory operatives; and a fact, to which every physician in Lowell, whose professional duties have extended to persons living on the corporations, can bear witness. I would not be understood as laying any blame to the keepers of the boarding houses, in this matter, for I freely admit that the price of board does not allow of their making suitable provisions for the comfort of their boarders. Let the corporations that fix the price of board, bear the censure.

One other evil attributable to the penurious price to which the board is limited, deserves attention.—There is not suitable provisions made for the comfort of the sick, in the Boarding-houses;—nor can there be under the present arrangements as to the price of board.

The girls are, of course, sometimes unwell and are obliged to

come out or stay out of the mills. In the boarding-houses there are none of those comforts and accommodations provided, that are so much needed by those who are away from their homes, sick. There is no one to take care of them—there is no one to render them *any* assistance. The Boarding-house keepers cannot attend to them, however much they may be disposed to do, for their own very bread depends upon their devoting all their time to prepare in due season for the well. If the sick girls have sisters or friends, to whom they can look for assistance, or if they have money to pay for it, they may be taken care of; but if they are not fortunate enough to have either, (and many there are, that have neither friends nor money,) they must,—and do suffer for the want of requisite aid. In the winter especially do they suffer if sick. There is not, as there should be at the boarding-houses, any fire kept by which they may keep themselves comfortable; except in the kitchen, and here they are not wanted. They must therefore, if they come out of the mills, go to their rooms, all cold, comfortless and cheerless as they are; and here enfeebled in body and sick at heart, they shiver and suffer alone. Nor is their situation much better in summer, if so unwell as to require rest and retirement; being obliged to go to a hot, badly ventilated room, crowded with three or four, or more beds and compelled to suffer the intolerable annoyance of filthy vermin. Well persons placed in such situations would become sick; and certainly they are not favorable circumstances for the recovery of the sick.

But it may be said, that there is now a Hospital where the sick may receive proper care and attention. This may be true. But there are innumerable cases where rest and kindly nursing, for a few days, is all that is necessary to restore health. Under such circumstances they do not want to go to the hospital; nor is it proper that they should go, every time, they suffer from a cold or trifling illness; and could they at such times receive proper attention, the necessity for the Hospital would be, in a great degree, superseded.

I come now to speak of that greatest of all evils from which the factory operatives suffer,—the unreasonable length of time they are obliged to labor. I have not the means to make an accurate estimate of the time devoted to labor, but as near as I can calculate from the data I have, it averages through the year

near thirteen hours per day—certainly not less than twelve and a half hours, of actual toil.

In speaking of this subject it has always been customary to reckon only the time actually devoted to labor in the mills; and this is not reckoned correctly, on account of a mean, despicable cheat that is practised by the corporations in starting on the work before the time announced and before the bell rings. That this is practised on some of the corporations, I know to be a fact—I do not know whether it is practised on all of them or not. There is always some avaricious and unthinking persons, who to gain a cent will go half starved and deprive themselves of all the comforts of life. There are some such among the factory operatives. These, being job hands, regardless of consequences hurry to the mills a few minutes before the time, so that they may be sure, not to lose a minute's time. The corporation folks, knowing that every minute added to the hours of labor, adds something to their profits, take advantage of their haste, and start on the mills about five minutes before the appointed time, that they may commence work. Others are naturally excited by a spirit of emulation and also go to work. This is done in the morning, at breakfast-time and at noon-time; thereby deducting about ten minutes from the time nominally allowed for meals, and adding about fifteen minutes per day, to the time of labor, as made apparent to the public by announcement and by the ringing of the bells. In this matter the operatives—or some of them at least, are blameable; certainly the avaricious ones, who go first to gain a few minutes labor, thereby naturally creating a spirit of emulation in those who would not otherwise go. In the next place the Overseers, who are rewarded by a system of premiums for over-work, are to blame for encouraging this extra labor. But the agents of the mills should be visited with the severest censure, for allowing the physical powers of unthinking females to be thus over-taxed.

In estimating the time devoted by the operatives to their employment, and especially, if with a view to ascertain what time they have to devote to other purposes, there should be added to the hours of actual labor in the mills, the time consumed at meal-times, and in preparing to go to work, and in going to and returning from work, making full two hours,—being time justly charg-

able to the corporations. We speak then within the bounds of truth in saying, that an average of fifteen hours out of the twenty-four are devoted to the interests of the corporations by the operatives, reckoning as we should from the time that they are called from their beds in the morning, by the, all powerful mandate of the factory bell, to the time, that they have eaten their suppers and prepared themselves for such business, recreation, and amusement,—or religious, intellectual and moral instruction as they may choose, or as may be proper and necessary for their comfort, health and general well-being.

Lct us review the every day routine of a factory life.

In the summer, the operatives are called from their beds by the ringing of the bells, as soon as half past four o'clock, and commence labor at five. After they have hurried into the mills, the gates are closed after them, and bars and bolts are interposed between them and the rest of the world. Here they are, to all intents and purposes imprisoned. If any of their friends want to see them during their hours of labor, the sign over the gate—"No Admittance," warns them not to intrude. Now why people should be so strictly excluded from the mills, I cannot conceive, except it be to hide from the friends of the operatives and the public, the real nature and character of factory employment. I do not know why there is any more need of guarding against the interruption of business in the mills, by the operatives having the privilege of seeing their friends while at work, than there is in other occupations. There is certainly nothing in the mills so pleasant, as to offer any inducement to any one to stop any longer than necessity requires, except it be curiosity to learn the condition of the operatives *while at work*;—and *that* their friends and the community have a right to know. But it may be said, that if any one wishes to see any of the operatives, he can go to the counting room, and they will be called out. This is generally understood to be customary, and in most cases, perhaps, the wishes of friends may be gratified, after submitting to the impertinence of those important personages, the corporations' underlings in the counting rooms, and waiting some half or three fourths of an hour. But there are many cases, where people go to the counting rooms and call for persons, and after submitting to the insolence of those servants of the corporations, are, either by direct refusal to call them out, or by

indirect evasion and sometimes by downright lying, prohibited from all access to their friends. They are told, that they cannot be called out,—that they must see them at their boarding house,—that they are out sick,—or some other excuse or evasion is made. And especially is this the case, if the inquirers are from the country and probably not prepared to contradict the falsehoods, and press their requests. I have known cases, where persons from the country have come to see their relations, and have been to the counting room of the corporation, where they were in fact at work, and have there been told that no such person as they called for, worked there. And sometimes after going round the city, to every counting room to enquire, lest there might be some mistake, in their information, as to the corporation where they worked, they have gone home in much trouble of mind, wondering what had become of their children, or of their brothers or sisters. It is important that the community should know these facts, especially, as they show the estimation in which the operatives are held by the corporations. They keep them at work as long as their natures will endure, unmindful of their intellectual or moral wants;—and as the facts, we have stated in relation to denying their friends access to them, show, regardless of all kindred ties and social feelings. They regard them, but as mere parts of the machinery, with which they accumulate money,—and their greatest skill is used to keep that part of the machines, which is made of *human flesh, and blood, and bones*, in operation, the same number of hours, and at the same speed, as those parts, which are made of *iron and wood*. And they contrive to keep them at work all the time, except barely giving an opportunity for them to get their food, and recruit by sleep the *human* part of the machinery.

The operatives, after working two hours before breakfast, are allowed a short half hour for breakfast;—they then return to the mills and work till dinner, for which they are allowed three fourths of an hour;—they again return to their work, and leave off at seven o'clock. They then have to go home and get their suppers and prepare themselves for such further occupation of their time, as to them seemeth best. This will occupy their time till about eight o'clock, making about fifteen and a half hours of the day devoted to their employers' interest.

In the winter, they are obliged to get up in the morning before day-

light—say somewhere from five to half past five o'clock,—eat their breakfasts by lamp-light—go into the mills and work from fifteen to thirty minutes by lamp-light;—remain through the day in a carefully closed room, that of course retains the lamp smoke generated in the morning, and in which are from forty to ninety persons inhaling and re-inhaling the same polluted atmosphere—then work in the evening from two to three hours by lamp-light—and at half past seven o'clock, are dismissed to wallow home through the snow, if perchance it has stormed, to their boarding-houses.—Having partaken of their suppers, somewhere from eight to half past eight o'clock, they may prepare themselves, after from fourteen to fifteen hours of fatigue in the corporation's service, for instruction, amusement, or such labor for themselves as may be necessary.

I am aware, that the time devoted to meals and the toilet, and that taken up in going to, and returning from the mills, is not generally reckoned, as time spent in the employ of the corporations. A part of it strictly speaking, it is true, is not devoted to labor for them.

But they can do nothing for themselves in this time—they can neither sew nor knit—read nor write—nor can they attend to any moral or religious instruction. It is in fact, time over which they have no more control for their own benefit, than the time in which they are tending their spindles or their looms.

One matter I should notice as necessarily employing a portion of their remaining time. By an understanding between the boarding-house keepers and the girls, they wash for each one a certain number of pieces per week; all above this number each girl is obliged to do for herself. The number agreed upon is not sufficient for those, who have a due regard to cleanliness and neatness of dress. The girls therefore are obliged to do about half of their own washing and ironing. This is a circumstance worthy to be remembered in considering the condition of factory operatives, *as consuming a portion of their time*—not as being a labor improper for them to perform, if they had sufficient time. Would to God, that there might be no female, whose situation should exclude her from domestic employments, which are her proper concerns, and should be esteemed as her birth-right. But this is all the domestic or household duty the girls in the mills have an opportunity to perform. For a factory life leads to a total abandonment and consequent ignorance of all such

work ; and but very few of the females, that have been constantly employed in the mills for three years, would, in case they were so fortunate as to get married, know how to cook their husbands a breakfast.

We have seen that the operatives in the mills are employed fifteen hours, leaving them but nine hours out of the twenty-four, for sleep and other purposes. According to the best information, I can gather from the experience of distinguished physiologists laboring persons generally, require eight hours sleep. Allowing them this time, there remains but one hour to be devoted to moral and religious instruction, the cultivation of their intellectual capacities, and for diversion and social amusements. Now all these things are just as necessary for the full developement of the faculties of the human mind and body, as is the food we eat or the air we breathe ; and no one can be a whole and perfect human being without them. No one will contend, that one hour is a sufficient time for the cultivation and gratification of all these capacities and desires. If then they be gratified, it must be, by robbing the physical nature, by encroaching upon time, that should be devoted to sleep. If on the other hand they be not gratified, the intellectual nature must be robbed of its due cultivation and enjoyment. In either case, a wicked robbery is committed—a robbery, that as sure as there is a God, who has ordained immutable laws, by which the universe is governed, shall be punished with the vengeance of violated law, visited upon the heads of the transgressors.

When we see females devoting fifteen hours of their time to their daily employment, for a livelihood, and *laboring* incessantly nearly thirteen hours per day, and situated in such circumstances as we have pointed out, and subjected to the thousand other evils of a factory life, can we wonder, if we see them fatigued and enfeebled, and but just able to drag their weary limbs from the mills to their boarding houses ? And can we any longer wonder that the rose and bloom of health fades from their cheeks ?

There is no class of persons in this country situated in circumstances so unfavorable to health. And so far as this is concerned, the condition of the slaves is infinitely better than that of factory operatives. If the moral and intellectual condition of the latter be better, no thanks are due to the factory system ; for that allows

them less time for the *improvement* of their intellect or morals, than the slaves enjoy. But let them be grateful rather, to the home-bred precepts of their unpolished, country parents, and the instructions received at a New England country school-house.

Can any man, pretending to common intelligence, with these facts staring him in the face, stand up in the light of Heaven and say that the females, employed in the mills under such circumstances, are on the whole, in no worse condition physically and intellectually after a residence here of three or four years. It would be a gross insult to the farmers of the country, their fathers, to tell them that their homes were such, that their daughters would *improve* more, by being subjected to the influences that surround a factory population than at home;—and it would be stamped as a falsehood by every man of common sense, at all conversant with the facts.—There are many startling facts, that might be told, which show the effects of the factory system upon the *morals* of the operatives;—and it is a fact that is well known to every observing person, that nearly all the females leave the mills despoiled of the health with which they came. And would to Heaven that the loss of health, were the only loss they suffer in consequence of circumstances and temptations attendant on a factory life.

I have thus far in the examination into the condition of the factory operatives, given a plain statement of facts, pointing out some of the evils, to which they are subjected, and making such remarks as occurred in relation to the effects of such evils upon their moral, mental and physical natures. It must not be supposed that I have noticed *all* the evils, that exist in a manufacturing population. There are undoubtedly very many things in their situation justly worthy of complaint, that never meet the public eye, the particulars of which, I have no means of ascertaining correctly. Were there such facts as would show a favorable picture of the condition of the factory operatives, the wished for information might readily be obtained from the Agents and Superintendents of the mills. But it should be remembered, that *they* have a direct interest to conceal all such circumstances as would tend to expose the *evils* of the factory system. As to the statements here made, I have derived my information from the best sources to me accessible, and it has been my aim to confine myself strictly to truth.

The reader will bear in mind, that it was stated in the beginning, that there were two interests at the bottom of things here. I shall now review some of the movements originated by, and for the benefit of, the foreign or Corporation interest;—movements, by which the evils, the operatives now suffer may be perpetuated, and by which in the course of time, yet *heavier burthens* may be laid upon their backs. Especial reference is had to the means used by the Agents and Superintendents of the mills, by which an erroneous impression is given to the community, as to the condition of a manufacturing population. In the first place, in order to judge of the motives of the Agents, it is proper to look at the position, in which they stand. They are stipendiaries of the stockholders,—hired to manage their concerns here, being subservient to their interest and subject to their control. The sole object of the stockholders is, to make all the money they can;—it is for this purpose alone, they have here invested their capital. For the condition of the poor girls, who are wearing out their lives in their service,—coining their very heart's blood into dollars to swell their dividends, they have no care or thought, any further than they have for their machines,—namely the amount of money they may earn them. The policy and movements of the Agents here, will of course, be such as will best please the owners, their employers, and will be governed by the grand main-spring of all their operations—making money. They will therefore manage in such a manner as to get the *greatest possible* amount of labor performed, for the *least possible* amount of money. And, when fairly examined, all their kindness and sympathy in “*vindicating*” the operatives, will be found to have been expended with an eye to the reduction of their wages.

The price of wages must always be graduated by the same rule, that regulates the prices of all things else, namely by the relation, one to the other, of supply and demand. If there be more applicants for employment, than are wanted to perform the required amount of labor, the rate of wages will naturally decline. But on the other hand, if there be more work to be done, than the number of persons, readily obtainable, can perform, the rate of wages will just as naturally advance. To this natural law in relation to the reward of labor, the manufacturing corporations are subjected, and to secure their interest from the adverse effect of this law, they strive

with all the power and influence, they have acquired by their monopolising charters.

Now although it has been proclaimed far and near, that the operatives in the mills of New England are paid higher wages, than the same persons could obtain in any other employment, yet the corporations have never paid them a single farthing more than was necessary to ensure a sufficient supply of hands. And whenever, from any cause, there has been a temporary overplus of hands, they have immediately seized upon the opportunity, and have taken advantage of the destitute condition of many of the operative class, to reduce the wages to the utmost extent, to which their necessities would compel them to submit. This has been done, and by an organized combination among all the large manufacturing establishments, at least three several times within the last eight years.* The same spirit of avarice, that dictated those reductions, will, unless wisely and seasonably counteracted, when circumstances shall have given an opportunity, reduce the operatives in the mills, the sons and daughters of New England, to the crust of black bread and the spoonful of salt, that the trembling Russian serf, in humble submission, receives at the hand of his master.

If then it be trumpeted abroad, that high wages are here paid for labor, it certainly cannot be accredited to the *liberality* of the corporations, but to the fact, that the unfavorable condition of the operatives has been so well understood, that even the offer of high wages, has not been sufficient inducement to create a competition of operatives. For, although there may be occasionally a derangement of business, causing a temporary overplus of hands, there are sometimes more wanted than can be readily procured. Notwithstanding all the enticing allurements that have been held out, there are still many,—and they are sensible girls too, who instead of being charmed with the idea of obtaining money, and adorning their persons with the finery and gewgaws of *city fashions*, prefer to stay at home, and assist their mothers in their household duties,—wearing the modest,

* There has, within a few weeks last past, been still another general "cut down" of wages, and it is sometimes said, by corporation apologists, that the operatives are employed at all, out of pure kindness to them, there being nothing made by the stockholders! So much *kind feeling* is certainly remarkable, as coming from the bosoms of *soulless* corporations.

hough it may be called the homely dress, and the simple manners of a country girl—receiving instructions in useful knowledge, at the village school-house—and enjoying the innocent, social pleasures of a country life, and all the bright and hallowed endearments of the domestic fireside.

The corporations are therefore, sometimes much troubled to obtain hands enough to run all of their machinery. They are obliged to send agents into the country,—into Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, to tell partial and flattering stories of the prospects of factory girls. These agents, they pay a stipulated sum per head, for hiring girls and bringing them here to keep their machinery in operation. This method of obtaining help, is attendant with much trouble and expense; and under such a state of things, they cannot of course reduce the wages to so low a rate, as is to them desirable. This order of things is the reverse of that, they would establish. Instead of being obliged to go to the operatives and entreat them to come and labor in the mills, offering them high wages, to induce them to leave their homes, they would have the operatives come to them in crowds, as poor suppliant mendicants, entreating for the privilege, to work for the smallest pittance to keep them from starving.

To induce an overplus population to flow in upon manufacturing places, whereby may be established an order of things, by which the operatives may be oppressed by the utmost possible reduction of wages, they have of late adopted a cheaper method, than to send special agents into the country. The plan is, to seize upon every possible means to circulate and give currency to the idea that a manufacturing village in New England, and Lowell especially, is almost an earthly Paradise, and a place peculiarly favorable for all persons, and particularly females, to improve in morals—in intelligence—in health—and in all the graces and refinements, that adorn society.

One of the means, used by them in the furtherance of this plan, was the "Sketch of Lowell" by the Postmaster of this city.* This "Sketch" was an altogether one-sided affair, shewing but the bright side of the picture of a manufacturing place and population, and excluding every thing, that in any manner indicated the existence of

* Residents of Lowell will of course understand, that the former Postmaster is referred to, who was removed after the above was first published.

any evils. It was evidently written, with the view of giving the most favorable impression possible, of Lowell, as a manufacturing place, by shewing in the strongest light every favorable circumstance, and keeping entirely out of sight all unfavorable ones. This partial account of Lowell was published in large editions of the three principal newspapers of this city and with much pains, circulated over the country. The motive of the writer, in thus consenting to stoop and cringe at the footstool of corporation influence,—thus to daub over a system, he had before condemned, it may be fairly presumed, was his desire to secure the influence of the corporation Agents, in favor of the retention of his office.

But the corporations receive very important and essential assistance, in this, their cunningly devised and deep-laid scheme, from some of the female operatives themselves, who, poor deluded victims, whose interests it is intended to sacrifice, are flattered and seduced to lend their aid in preparing the altar, upon which their own well-being is to be offered up to mammon. This is the most nefarious and unrighteous transaction of all.

I refer to the influence that is exerted upon the community *out of Lowell*, through the medium of the Lowell Offering and Operatives Magazine. I shall notice more particularly the Lowell Offering, that being the pioneer work. This periodical, from its novelty, has attained an extensive notoriety. And the flattering notice it has received from all quarters, has been justly merited, especially if we consider the circumstances of the contributors to its columns. Its effect upon the operatives in the mills, so far as it affords them an inducement for the exercise of their minds, would undoubtedly be salutary, if they were allowed time, to devote to such pursuits. As it is, I have doubts whether, as a whole, they are much benefited by its publication.—But of this it is not my intention to speak. It is the *use made of it by the corporations*, to which I would call the attention of the community.

I presume that the main object of the person, chiefly instrumental in getting up the Offering, was, what, in these days of *interested* benevolence, is esteemed a worthy one, and common to laity and clergy, viz: to make money. Perhaps he also might have thought of the advantages of increased influence, and anticipated the gratification of celebrity. Perhaps his object was disinterested benevolence.

But what may have been the primary object of its publication, matters not to my present purpose. If it was intended solely for the benefit of the females employed in the mills, and if its effect be really advantageous to them in some points, I am sorry to be compelled to say, that the use that is made of it, will, in the end, be productive of evils to the same females, or their successors, which will more than counterbalance any seeming good, they may at present, derive from it.

Immediately after the commencement of its publication, the keen sighted money makers, the stockholders and their agents, were remarkably active in its circulation. They bought it by dozens—by fisties—and by hundreds, and sent it all over the country. In addition to the notice it received from the press generally, on account of its novelty, those presses in the interest of the corporations took especial pains to favorably recommend it. After some few numbers were published as an experiment, an effort was made to permanently establish the work. In this effort, the Agents and Superintendents were most active, aided by their time-serving assistant, the Post Master. About this time a recommendation of the work was published, signed by, I think, all the Agents and Superintendents of the Lowell Mills, and such other persons, as could be induced, through hope of favour, or unthinkingly, from mere courtesy, to lend their names. I mention these things to show the great interest, the corporations feel in the Offering.

And now the question comes—Why is it so? Did the stockholders invest their money here for the benefit of the operatives, or of themselves? Is not money-making the object of all their immense operations here?—It is not then, altogether incompatible with the nature of man, that they should turn even the Offering of the factory girls to their own advantage in this respect. This I believe is their intention, and therefore give this exposition.

I have shown that their constant endeavor has been, to reduce the wages to the lowest extent. But in this, then have been defeated by the lack of hands. Now there are thousands of females in the country, who for the wages they could here receive, would be very glad to come and work in the factories, were it not for the impression, which very justly exists, that a manufacturing city is not the best place in the world, as a school for intellectual improvement and moral culture. If this impression can be changed, those girls in the

country, whose regard for health and for moral and intellectual welfare, has more influence over them, than the desire to get money, would come to Lowell and other manufacturing places. Then, there being an over-flowing crowd of applicants, the corporations would have the power in their own hands to dictate to them the terms, upon which they might have the *privilege* of laboring for their bread. That they would use this power when obtained, we all know from experience.*

What an opportunity then was presented by means of the Offering, to change the public sentiment upon this point! And this was undoubtedly the object of the corporations in taking so much interest in its circulation. And whatever may be the object of the chief proprietor and manager, he is wittingly or unwittingly, made the cat's-paw in the hands of the corporations to effect their object. I would not impeach the motives of that gentleman; but there may be such a thing as being so blinded by zeal in the enterprise, in which he is engaged, that his attention may not be turned to the *future* effect of his *present* labors.

Saying nothing of their literary merit, the character and tone of the articles, that appear in the Offering, are such as to have a tendency to quiet all discontent among the operatives, so that they may remain and submit without a murmur, to all the evils of their condition. There is no breath of complaint to be found in any of the productions of these female writers; they speak of nothing but their enjoyment; and the few pleasures of which they are permitted to partake, are magnified and enlarged upon. They show but the picture of the fair side of their situation, and sing of nought but the flowers, that are occasionally scattered in their path. Like poor caged birds, while singing of the beauty and fragrance of the roses, that bloom around them, they forget the bars of their prison, around which they are twined so gracefully, to cover and conceal.

The Offering, thus got up, and possessing this character, is sent out as a specimen, of the intelligence and sentiment of factory operatives; and the question is triumphantly asked, "can the factory system, have a deteriorating effect, when this is a specimen of what factory girls can do?"

* And the late reduction of wages, has added much to that experience.

But the impression concerning the character and condition of factory operatives, that would be gathered by those at a distance, not conversant with the peculiar circumstances of a manufacturing population, would be far from the truth. And I presume that many girls in the country, after reading the Offering and its flattering notices, have hastened to Lowell expecting to find it almost a Paradise, and the factory girls all accomplished ladies, and poetesses, capable of editing a respectable literary periodical. And they have expected that in due time, by some mysterious operation of the eternally buzzing machinery, they also should be metamorphosed into literary prodigies,

Now when the true statement of things in relation to the Lowell Offering is considered, there is nothing so very wonderful that such a publication should be established. There is nothing very strange, that, out of some seven or eight thousand females, many of whom have had the advantage of an excellent education before coming here, there should be some fifteen or twenty, who have not by the sufferings of a factory life, so far degenerated as to have become incapable of writing a respectable article.

The principle writers for the Offering do not, probably exceed in number five or six; and including all the occasional correspondents, whose articles are admitted, the writers would not probably number twenty individuals, at any rate being but a very small proportion of the females employed in the mills. The literary productions of these few girls, before appearing in the columns of the Offering, must pass the ordeal of the examination, and must be subjected to the editorial license of its very critical manager and proprietor; and in order that they may have the gratification of seeing the productions of their pens in print, their communications must be of such tone and tenor, as he will approve. What absurdity then, and downright dishonesty too, to send forth to the public, a work thus got up and thus managed, as an expression of the feelings and opinions of the females working in the factories, concerning their own condition and character, and as a sample of their intellectual cultivation and literary accomplishments, *as a class!* Yet this is what is done by the corporations;—and this is that, of which I complain.

The impression, that would naturally be received from the communications of these few writers for the Offering, by persons at a

distance, not acquainted with the condition of affairs here, is not the one that would be expressed by the mass of female operatives, could they speak untrammeled and uninfluenced, the convictions of their own experience. It is just such an impression as the interests of the corporations would seem to demand; and consequently the organ that conveys it, is used by them as a powerful auxiliary in their avaricious schemes for adding to their dividends, by adding to the burdens of those, who are, by it flattered and lulled into forgetfulness of the wrongs they suffer.

I would not accuse any person concerned, of being in any manner unduly influenced by the corporations, but if such an opinion is in any quarter entertained, the character of the work is a sufficient justification for such opinion. There being a very general admission, that, at least *some evils* do exist here, it is certainly very strange, that through this, the organ of the factory operatives (*if it be their organ,*) there should be heard, not the least murmur against any of the circumstances attending their situation.*

But I trust, they will not always remain silent under their wrongs. That there are those employed in the factories, who possess talents and ability, the columns of the Lowell Offering, and the Operatives' Magazine bear witness. I would invoke them then, in the name of much abused and oppressed humanity, to use the talents entrusted to them by God, in the true spirit of independence—I would call upon them to come out and expose the evils to which they are unjustly subjected,—and, in a voice that must be heard, demand, that their situation and condition may be so improved, that they may enjoy the benefits of that position in society, which their usefulness merits. Should they do this, the proprietor and publisher of their organ, might not perchance make so many dollars and cents by their participation in the operation: for then the corporations' *well paid* servants would not purchase the exposure of their own injustice, to distribute about the country,—and the Lowell Offering might not find its way to the parlors of the stockholders, the rich nabobs of

* Since these articles were first published, the proprietorship of the Lowell Offering has changed. It is now published by Wm. Schouler, at the office of the Lowell Courier, well known as the pensioned press and political organ of the Corporations in this city. The Operatives' Magazine has been discontinued, or rather united with the Offering.

Boston and New York, to be pored over as a soothing unction to their consciences, while enjoying the luxuries purchased by their large dividends wrung from the sufferings of the factory girls. Should they speak out independently the truth concerning their wrongs, they would not receive the sweet toned words of flattery, and the gratifying commendations of those, who have an interest to blind their eyes and deceive them, in order to perpetuate their wrongs. But theirs would be that recompense, which is greater than all and better than all,—the proud consciousness of having *done their duty*—of having fearlessly told the truth and the whole truth, in aid of the rights of humanity.

But there is one other thing I must notice is this connection, as an auxiliary of the corporations, as in fact a part of that complicated enginery, they have put in operation for, not only continuing the evils to which the operatives are subjected, but to put new burthens upon the poor victims, already being crushed by this machinery of oppression, the factory system, that is so ingeniously contrived to add to the wealth of the rich, by consuming the bodies and minds of the poor laborers.

I refer to a pamphlet, lately issued from the corporations' pensioned press, entitled, "A Vindication of the character and condition of the females employed in the Lowell Mills, against the charges contained in the Boston Times, and the Boston Quarterly Review. By ELISHA BARTLETT, M. D."

This work is an attempt, by carefully selecting the most favorable circumstances and ingeniously throwing them out in the strongest possible light, to gloss over the effects of the factory system; and its publication at this time shows, more plainly than any thing else, the designs of the corporations. It is in the main a republication of a series of articles that appeared some two years ago in the Lowell Courier, the organ of the corporations in this city. The reasons given for its appearance in its present form, may be gathered from the author's own words. In his introduction, he says;—"The fact of the local circulation to which its publication in a newspaper necessarily confined it, and the fact, also, that injurious remarks, similar to those which gave rise to the vindication, have recently been repeated, with emphasis and boldness, in high quarters of the public press, have induced the author to give it a more convenient form for

general distribution." But why is it, that so much pains are taken to lay before the public, at this time by "general distribution," the author's views of the advantages, the operatives derive from the factory system? Two years have passed since the statements were made in the Times, which gave occasion for the answer that appeared in the Courier; and that answer was as generally read by the people of Lowell, as were the charges that called it forth. The "injurious remarks," that the writer calls a *repetition* of the original charges, were made a year ago; and were seized upon by the political press of the country, and rung throughout the land, and denounced as false and calumnious. Besides, as the writer observes, a "smart and well written answer" to these last assertions, was given in the second number of the Offering. It would seem then, that enough had been done to have made manifest the falsity of those statements and remarks, if indeed, they were as utterly groundless as the writer has attempted to prove.

If there be no great and important evils, from which the operatives suffer, is it necessary, that the talents of so learned and logical a writer as Doctor Bartlett, should be called upon to make known the fact? According to his own showing, the females, employed in the factories, after a residence here of three or four years, return to their homes in the country, dispersing of course in every direction. *They* must be far better informed of the actual condition of factory operatives, than Doctor Bartlett can be supposed to be. If then, as he represents, Lowell be a place admirably calculated, for improvement in morals—for development of the intellect—for the preservation of health—and for qualifying females for all the duties of life—and especially, if by a residence here, they become more desirable and better fitted for wives, and their chances of marriage are increased, neither the corporations nor Doctor Bartlett, need give themselves any uneasiness, lest these facts should not be known. As he says they advance in intelligence during their residence here, he will of course admit that they have sufficient *ability*, and certainly from their own experience, they should be enabled to tell the story of their actual condition while here, much truer to the life than could he himself, with all his learning and literary reputation. But perhaps he may be piqued at the assertion of the Editor of the B. Q. Review, that this, his labor is but a "feeble attempt;" and he chooses to

appeal from that decision to a higher tribunal, the Voice of the People.

This "Vindication" it becomes my duty to notice, with the view of making such explanatory remarks, as are necessary for the proper understanding of some of the data, from which the writer deduces his argument. Without properly noticing and making allowance for, some circumstances, peculiar to such places as Lowell, which would not generally be thought of by persons not residents of a manufacturing village, he has inferred conclusions, that every day's experience must prove to be incorrect. For this reason and from the ingenious sophistry, with which he has labored in this work, the author must excuse the offence, if some, whose experience is co-extensive with his own, should, notwithstanding his introductory declaration to the contrary, conclude, that for a consideration received or *expected*, he has consented herein to become the suple and obsequious tool of the corporations.

With the controversy between the author of the "Vindication" and the Boston Times, I have nothing to do. It is not my purpose to decide whether the statements made were correct or not; or whether the answer to them was complete and conclusive. I shall confine myself to the original object, namely—to show the actual condition of the factory operatives. My intention in noticing this pamphlet, is merely to call the attention of the community, to some peculiar circumstances that account for some of the "fact's," upon which the writer bases his statements relative to the morals, health and general well-being of the females employed in the mills.

In the first place, there is something in the writer's prefatory remarks worthy of a passing notice. He professes to speak in defence of the people of Lowell; and, after stating his own connection and intercourse with the people, since he took up his residence here in the year 1827, for the purpose of ensuring confidence in the opinions and statements he advances, he declares his devotion to the well-fare of the population here gathered, and his desire to promote the greatest good of the human race. Furthermore he says, that his home, and all his interests are here, but disclaims being under any obligations to the corporations. "They have no property in my live spirit,"—are the words he uses to express his independence. Whether there was any *need* of disclaiming of corporation influ-

ence, in the getting up of this "Vindication," may be judged from an examination of the work.

The first point of the defence is against the charge, that was made in the Times, that the factory girls are, with some few exceptions, required to board in the corporation boarding-houses. As I mentioned this as one of the evils to which the factory operatives are subjected, it is proper that I examine the opinions and statements here made on this point. The writer says, "it is partly true, and partly false"—"the requisition being made on some of the corporations and on others disregarded." That there some, comparatively speaking, few of the girls that do not board on the corporations, I do not deny. But the mass of them are, either by the regulations, or by necessity arising from the want of other places sufficiently near the mills, compelled to put up with the accommodations of the corporation boarding-houses.

This is quietly passed over with the simple observation that it is "no very grave matter." But from this conclusion we beg leave to dissent. Not, that we think they would not be just as well off, to board in houses owned by the corporations as any others, were comfortable accommodations furnished them! But such is not the case. The evil, resulting from their being obliged to board on the corporations, is, that they are thereby too much crowded, to enjoy either comfort or health, and prevented from securing them by boarding elsewhere.

The second charge, against which, the author of the "Vindication" of the *factory girls*, attempts to defend the *Corporations* is "that the price of board is too low—that the girls are ill-fed."

In answer to the writer's own assertions, and inconclusive and sophistical arguments on this point, to those at all acquainted with the expense of house-keeping it is merely necessary to state, that the price of board is only *one dollar and thirty-seven and a half cents per week.** But as there are some persons, who may be liable to be deceived by his statements and sophistry, we will endeavor to put his "facts" in a light, that will enable all to understand the real truth of the matter.

In answer to this charge he says :

"A very simple and a very short statement of facts is quite sufficient to

* Now \$1.25.

set this matter in its true light." "Many hundreds of these girls, board in private houses kept in the neighborhood of the mills, *at the same*, or nearly the same price that is paid in the boarding-houses. And although the rents of the private houses, are somewhat higher, so that, in them, as good tables cannot be afforded, yet these girls find in *them*, even, lodging and food which are perfectly satisfactory."

His reasoning from these premises is, that as this is all a voluntary business on the part of the keepers of these private houses, and as they would not keep them against their own interest, the simple fact that they *do keep* them, proves conclusively, that the price of board is sufficiently high.

Let us carefully examine this statement and see if the conclusion drawn therefrom, and so confidently relied upon, be a logical one. In order to properly understand this matter one or two facts in addition to those he mentions, should be known. In the first place, the corporations have provided boarding accommodations, *such as they are*, for all their hands. In the next place—their boarding-houses are in the immediate vicinity of the mills, being much nearer than any of the private houses. Now taking his own statement for a fact, that "many hundreds of these girls board in these private houses," the following query arises—If the fare in the boarding-houses be altogether so "substantial in quality and quantity," as he represents, why is it, that so many subject themselves to the inconvenience of going farther (which by the way, is not a trifling consideration for females, especially in bad weather, and in the winter, when they leave the warm rooms of the mills and go to their homes *after dark*,) to board in private houses, in which, he says, they cannot afford to furnish as good tables? Why should they not, all very readily put up with the "*satisfactory*" accommodations of the factory boarding-houses, rather than "go farther and fare worse?" To my mind it seems, that this "very simple and short statement of facts" when carefully and candidly examined, completely confounds and overturns the position, the writer by it, attempts to establish. If the fact, that "many hundreds of these girls go off the corporation to board"—proves anything, it proves that the food and accommodations, that are afforded at the corporation price in the *boarding-houses*, are insufficient and unsatisfactory. And I cannot believe that the Editor of the Boston Quarterly Review, merited so cavalier a chastisement as he received in the introduction to this

'Vindication', for saying that such arguments to *contradict*, tended to *confirm* the original charges.

But I have not done with this "short statement." That the girls board at the same price in the private houses, as in the boarding-houses, is not true. The common price of board in the former is nearly ten per cent more than the corporation price, averaging from \$1,42, to \$1,50. This would more than counter-balance the difference in rent; so that they can afford to furnish better tables in these *private* houses, than can be afforded in the *corporation* houses. This is the reverse of the statement made in the "Vindication." Doctor Bartlett's own "statement of facts" will show most conclusively, whether his statement or mine be correct. He says, "many hundreds of these girls board in these *private* houses." It is verily true, that as many board in these houses, as can find accommodations sufficiently near the mills; and though they do not "find in *these* even lodging and food perfectly satisfactory," they do find boarding places, which they greatly prefer to the corporation houses. For proof of this I rely upon the fact, that although there is provision made for all, on the corporations—and notwithstanding they are obliged to pay more for board, as many as can be accommodated, crowd into these private houses. And so much more desirable are, these private houses considered, that a chance to board "off of the corporation," is deemed a *privilege* by the girls.

But I have something farther still to say in relation to this "short statement."

The writer's remarks would seem to convey the impression that these private boarding-houses are kept by persons, who, like the corporation boarding-house keepers, keep them for the sole purpose of keeping factory boarders. This is by no means the case. In fact I do not believe there is a single house of this kind, kept for the purpose of *making a business* of keeping such boarders. Many of these houses are kept by persons having children working in the factories, whom they want to have under their own care and protection. They consequently take a house near the mills, for their accommodation, and sometimes take a few other boarders. The other houses, for the most part, are kept by laborers and mechanics, whose work is in the mills, or in their vicinity, and being poor or in moderate circumstances,

they take some boarders; that perchance a small profit on their board may help pay their rent.

"As to the statement, that it is seldom that any complaints are made about the quality or quantity of the food in the boarding-houses,—it may be true that complaints are not often made to the agents, from whom the writer of the 'Vindication' obtained his information. The girls, choose to suffer inconvenience, or move to another place, or what is more commonly done, purchase with their hard earned wages, supplies at the confectioners' to splice out their scanty allowance, rather than go to the agents with complaints, which complaints would in most cases be disregarded; as the *comforts* of life, which they might ask for, and which they might think necessary, would, by the agents, be deemed extravagant luxuries, which *factory girls* should not think of enjoying. But to one another and to their friends, complaints of this character, it is well known, are common.

One other statement is worthy of notice as shedding some light upon the question—whether the price of board be sufficient. It is stated, that a portion or the whole of the rent of the boarding-houses, has sometimes been remitted by the corporations. If the price of board be sufficient to enable the boarding-house keepers to live and save money to deposit in the Savings Bank, why should the corporations deduct anything from the rent, which, it is stated, is but *four per cent* on the cost of the buildings? Such *generosity* is not common on the part of such soulless bodies.

As to bankruptcy among the boarding-house keepers, which he says is "*very rare*"—we would say, that at present it may be so. Since the price of board has been advanced, at times when provisions are low, it may be, that they get a living—and some of them, by extra toil and superior management, lay up a scanty pittance, in reserve for the return of "hard times." But before the price of board was raised, the Bakers and Butchers and Grocers know but too well, that bankruptcy among factory boarding-house keepers was an every-day occurrence. And it was with extreme reluctance, that the corporations raised the price of board. They delayed till the boarding-house keepers had expended all the small gains of former years of toil, and the alternative stared them in the face, of suffering the fate of the operatives to be reduced to a point of almost

starvation, or reducing the boarding-house keepers to universal bankruptcy. How soon such another time may come, when their present small savings will be needed to make up their then deficiency, we know not.

We would here remark, that the statements of Doctor Bartlett in relation to the price of board, refer only to the furnishing of meats and drinks, and an undivided sixth or tenth of a lodging room, in which to rest the weary limbs. But this is not all that is necessary. The price of board should be sufficient to make the boarding-house a *home*, and furnish it with the comforts of life that all have a right to enjoy, and especially the hard-working operatives in the mills.

The writer of the "Vindication" makes some remarks about the persons that keep the female boarding-houses, who he says, constitute a remarkably permanent portion of our population. I also have a few words to say of these persons, particularly in relation to their peculiar circumstances, with an eye to which, they are selected for the position they occupy. These houses are kept by women—mostly widows; but as is expressed in the "Vindication," "a few have husbands." Which language, would seem to imply, what is in fact the truth, that the few men in the boarding-houses, are mere appendages of their wives. There cannot be found a smart, enterprising man among them all. The women are mostly poor, and have to depend upon their own exertions for a sustenance. They locate here and their chief concern, and generally their highest ambition is, to get a living, and as long as they can *live*, they will remain without a murmur. Such being their condition, accounts for the fact that they remain so permanently. Their contentedness is not in consequence of their accumulating property by keeping factory-boarders.

The next subject that is taken up by the writer of this defence of the factory system, is "the health of a manufacturing population, especially the female portion of it" "This subject" he very truly remarks, "is one of exceeding importance, and it is also one, a certain and satisfactory knowledge of which is surrounded with many difficulties." And, I would add, as I have before had occasion to remark, that all conclusions upon this point, arrived at from any data that *can be obtained*, must necessarily be very wide from the truth, on account of the many *unascertainable* facts, having a bearing upon this question. Nevertheless Doctor Bartlett, by using such facts

only as he chooses to bring forward, makes out a specious argument, to prove that the health of the female operatives, not only does not deteriorate, but on the whole is better, than the average health of the community at large.

Now whatever may be the result that may appear from *these* facts, or from *any* facts that can be obtained, the conviction cannot be eradicated from the minds of unprejudiced and candid persons, who are capable of reasoning at all upon the immutable principles of cause and effect, that the factory operatives, from the nature of their employment, and from the circumstances that here surround them, are subjected to evils that must to a great extent prove destructive of health. And the observing citizens of Lowell, who have been accustomed to meet the pale faces—the sickly, deathly countenances of the factory girls, must regard these arguments as fallacious reasonings and deceptive sophistries, by which the writer would attempt to disguise the real truth, and contradict the fact, that is staring every one in the face, that the labor in the mills and the accompanying evils of a factory life, is destroying the health of a large portion of the female operatives.

The first facts, upon which he relies to prove that a manufacturing population are not enfeebled and unhealthy, are the bills of mortality of Lowell. These he says, show an extraordinary small number of deaths in proportion to the population. But he admits, that the rate of mortality “is not alone and in itself an infallible or even a safe standard of the general health;” and there are circumstances peculiar to a manufacturing population, which will show that this is especially true with respect to Lowell. When these circumstances are duly weighed, the wonder will no longer be, that the bills of mortality show so *small* a number of deaths, but rather, that the number is so *large* even as it is.

In the first place, let it be remembered, that a large proportion, say one half of our whole population are persons employed in the mills, who have homes in the country. There are no accommodations in the boarding-houses for the comfort of the sick, and they have no friends here, upon whom they can rely for that kind attention and care, which they so much need. If they remain here, they must suffer from neglect. All who have homes therefore, if sick, return immediately to their friends, and many die among their kin-

dred. They have labored here, and here have they contracted their fatal diseases; but the consummation of their factory labor, death, occurs somewhere else, and is not recorded as an evidence against the evils they here suffered, and which brought them to a premature grave. Moreover the nature of their employment is such that it affects many, especially females, by gradually encroaching upon their health and vigor of life, by slow and almost imperceptible advances, till at last their constitutions become so much impaired that they are compelled to give up, and go back to their homes, where they linger out many years of hopeless suffering.* From these well-known facts, it will readily be seen that bills of mortality do not give even an approximation to the actual amount of sickness justly attributable to the factory system.

But there is one other peculiarity of our population, that should be borne in mind, as explanatory of the small number of deaths in proportion to the whole number of inhabitants. This peculiarity exists in the ages of our inhabitants as compared with those of other places. Lowell like most other manufacturing villages, has sprung up within a few years. The 22 thousand people that are here gathered, were not born and bred here. They are mostly young persons that have come here from the country in the very prime of life and vigor of health. And they do not generally remain here long enough to grow old and infirm—nor can they. For after a few years service here, nature, over-taxed, falters, and warns them to quit an employment that is dragging them too fast to their graves. They leave the city—and their places are again filled by the young and the healthy.

There is something about the character of a manufacturing population in this respect, that will appear remarkable to those who have not before turned their attention to this subject. We here introduce some facts, for which we ask the candid consideration of all. The whole number of inhabitants in Lowell, according to the Census of 1840, is 29,816. Of these 10,717 are between the ages of 15 and 30 years—and 13,573 are between 15 and 40 years. Again—the number of persons over 60 years is but 275; and the number under 10, is 3631. We give in connexion for the convenience of comparison, the same statistics in relation to the population of Portsmouth, N. H., as shown by the late Census. We take this place, not because we think it a perfectly fair sample of a New England population, but because it is the only one, the Census of which we have at hand; and moreover it is the place that Dr. Bartlett has

* It is a fact, perhaps not generally known, that the operatives in the mills suffer to a very great extent from those complaints peculiar to females,—many in fact suffering nearly all the time. This may arise from the nature of their employment, but probably from a combination of evils; they suffer in the mills and at their boarding-houses. Many of the girls, being young and inexperienced, keep this matter secret, not being aware that it is owing to any thing peculiar in their factory life, or that it is destroying their constitutions and hurrying them to premature graves.

selected, by which to compare Lowell in another respect. The total number of inhabitants in Portsmouth, is 7834. Of this number 2345 are between the ages of 15 and 40 years. The number of persons over 60 years, is 452—and the number under 10, is 1949.

By far the greatest comparative mortality, to which mankind are subjected, occurs under the age of 10, and over the age of 60—and the least occurs between the ages of fifteen and forty ;—or in other words, during the frail and weakly years of infancy, and the worn out and decrepit days of old age, on the one hand,—and during the years of the health and strength of vigorous manhood on the other. Now if the facts we have given be examined carefully, and a comparison made between the ages of the population of Lowell and that of Portsmouth, or of any place, other than a manufacturing village, a most remarkable and unusual state of things, will be found to exist here. An uncommonly large proportion of our population are of that age, least subject to mortality, having passed all the perils of infancy and not yet having reached the dangers attendant on the close of the voyage of life. And there is as remarkably small a proportion, of those ages, during which there occurs the greatest mortality.

More than half of our population are between 15 and 30, and nearly two thirds are between 15 and 40, which fact it will be seen, shows a vast difference between our population and that of Portsmouth. On the other hand, the number of persons in Lowell under 10 years, is but about one in six, while in Portsmouth the number is about one in four. And again the number of persons over 60 years, in Lowell with a population of 20,816 is but 275, while in Portsmouth, with a little more than one third of the population, there are 452.

These facts are sufficient to account for the small number of deaths in factory villages, where there may be nevertheless much unhealthiness generated; and they show most conclusively the fallacy of the attempt to prove by bills of mortality, that the health of factory operatives is as good as that of the community generally. Notwithstanding the small number of deaths that occur *here*, I believe that the number of persons, that die *between the ages of 15 and 30 years*, is larger in proportion to the population, in Lowell, than in any other place in New England. This is mere speculation to be sure ; but let any person go into the grave-yards in Lowell, and not only count the graves, but read upon the head-stones, the announcement of the *ages* of the sleepers, and a speculative opinion based

upon honest convictions, if not on acknowledged and apparent facts will be pardoned.

I come now to notice the further data, by which Doctor Bartlett endeavors to prove the unimpaired health of the factory operatives, and the ingenious manner of procuring and stating the facts, upon which he bases his argument. Having obtained facts, that show a very partial view of the actual health of the females employed in the mills, he puts them forth quite boastingly as a complete refutation of all the charges of the unhealthiness of a manufacturing population.

These facts the writer says he, with the assistance of some of the agents and overseers procured in the year 1835. His object he says, was

"To ascertain as nearly as he could from the girls themselves and from their overseers, *the effect produced upon them by their occupation in the mill*. To this end, enquiries were made of them as to their ages, and the time they had worked in the mill,—and the question was put to them, "Is your health as good, or is it not as good, since you have worked in the mill, as it was before?" The results obtained were as follows: "In a spinning room the whole number of girls employed was 55, average age, 18 years and six months, the average time they worked in the mills, was nearly three years. Of these 55, 41 answered that their health was as good as before—3 that it was better—and 11 that it was not as good. In a carding room, the whole number of girls was 22; average age, nearly 23 years, average time of having worked in the mills 2 years and 9 months:—as well, 12; better, 8; not so well, 2. In another room; the whole number of girls was 36; average time of having worked in the mills, 23 months—health as good, 26; not as good, 7; better, 3."

Now whatever inference the writer would draw, or have others draw from these tables, although they do not show, near the whole amount of unhealthiness that is really caused here, to my mind they show most clearly an increase of ill health. Taking the first room, we find that more than one fourth of the girls answered that their health was not as good as before they worked in the mill, and deducting from them a number sufficient to counter-balance those who said their health was better, we find a balance of more than one fifth of these girls, whose health has been impaired by their factory life. The next room shows a result, the reverse of this—there being more, that answered that their health was better, than that they were not as well. But this, all recent enquiries show to be an uncommon result. The next room shows again, more, who said their health was not as good, than that it was better. Taking the whole together, there were 12, whose health was better, and 20 who were not as well, showing a decided increase of ill health.

This appears at first sight, to be a fair method of ascertaining

the effect of the factory system upon the health of the operatives; but as I shall hereafter explain, it is very far from showing the *whole* truth in relation to this matter. And although these data show that the health of the factory operatives deteriorates, they do not show that there are so many persons suffering from ill health, as there are generally supposed to be, or so many as in reality there are. Therefore the corporations have adopted the plan of procuring and publishing these facts, to show that the general opinion upon this point is incorrect. They have repeated these inquiries on an extensive scale within the last few months; the result of which I copy from a note in Doctor Bartlett's "Vindication" as follows:—

"Of twenty-six hundred and ten girls, who returned answers to these questions, one hundred and seventy call themselves better than they were before entering the mills, fifteen hundred and sixty-three call themselves as well, or healthy, or in good health, or in very good health, and eight hundred and seventy-eight not so well, or not quite so well, or not very well."

This statement of the result of these inquiries seems to be introduced here by the writer, for the purpose of proving the unimpaired health of the factory girls. For without calling the attention particularly to the proportion of the sick as compared with the well, he immediately proceeds to make some taunting and invidious remarks concerning assertions, that had been made about the health of these girls, as if the facts that appear from these answers of the girls, completely refuted the "*monstrous assertions.*" But to me it appears, that the result of this examination is *proof positive*, that the health of our manufacturing population has greatly deteriorated.

Let us carefully examine the result of this inquiry into the state of the health of the factory girls, as shown by these, their answers. Of the twenty-six hundred and ten girls, who answered to the inquiries, more than one third stated that they were "not so well as they were before they worked in the mills; or that they were not quite so well, or not very well," by which language they probably meant the same thing. And of the whole number of girls who answered, there were but one hundred and seventy, who said their health had improved since entering the mills.

Now taking this fact alone, without any further explanation, it certainly shows a very remarkable result as to the health of that class of individuals. It is stated that the average age of the girls, is about twenty-three years, and that their average factory life is about three years. Their average age at the time they commenced work in the mills, would consequently be about twenty. The health of females generally at twenty-three, is as good if not better than at

twenty. Why then, if there be nothing in their situation and employment detrimental to health, should more than one third of the females employed in the mills, complain at the age of twenty-three, that their health is not so good as it was at 20, their average age at entering the mills? Reasoning from the nature of things, we should come to the conclusion that the health of females is better at twenty-three than at twenty. And I think an enquiry into the fact, would prove this to be true. I think that were twenty-six hundred females in any other situation in life, whose average ages are 23 years, asked this same question in relation to the change in their health during the last three years, that more would answer that they were better, than would say they were worse. But with respect to the factory population, we see that a very much larger number say their health is not as good, than say it is better. These facts alone, without explanation or comment are conclusive, that there is something in the situation and employment of the females in the mills, that is, to an alarming degree, destructive to health.

Although these facts, unaccompanied with other facts in *connexion*, of which no mention is made, show a great increase of *ill health*, yet they are evidently published to show in a favorable light, the effect of factory labor upon the health of the girls working in the mills. And they *do show* a favorable state of health, as compared with the *real fact*, and favorable, as compared with that, which will appear when the *whole truth* is told.

There are always more or less girls out of the mills on account of ill health. Some who have been taken with violent diseases; and some who have patiently endured untold sufferings, till they have worked themselves to the very verge of the grave, and when they could work no longer, have gone home, and from necessity have forsaken forever the *life*, that has already sown the seeds of their premature *death*. But the greater part are those, whose constitutions have been gradually wearing out, by incessant toil and other evils to which they have been subjected, and who are compelled to leave them ill for a time, to recruit their failing powers. The average number of those out sick, I have not the means of accurately ascertaining, for I presume the superintendents of the mills would not render any aid in obtaining facts, that would be unfavorable to their interests. I will give such information upon this subject as I have been enabled to obtain. From one room, in which the average number of girls employed is 40, five are now absent for the purpose of recovering their health. This is one eighth of the

number employed, which proportion would give one thousand girls, of the whole number employed in the mills in Lowell, who are out of the mills sick. But perhaps this may be a larger number than the average,—I think it is; but if there be one half that proportion, and I think there is more, still the number would be large. The statements of these persons are not recorded in the tables that were made out to show the health of the factory girls. But in their stead are recorded the answers of the same number of new hands, fresh from the country, who fill their places. It will then readily be seen, that the conclusion, drawn from these facts as given, must be by far too favorable; a large portion of those, whose health has suffered in consequence of working in the mills, being left out of the account. Could the number of those that had just left the mills finally on account of ill health, and those that had left temporarily to recruit, be ascertained at the time of taking this account, and added to the number that answered that their health was not as good as before working in the mills, the result would be very different from the one now given.

There is another fact stated by Doctor Bartlett, in proof of the good health enjoyed by females employed in the mills, which like most of his facts, requires some explanation, or in other words, requires that the *whole* truth should be told. The fact as he states it, is thus:—

"Dividing the girls into two classes—those who have been at work for a period of time, short of the average, and those above the average, it is found that those who have been longest in the mill, are in as good health as those who have recently come from the country."

In connexion with this fact, it should be borne in mind, that there are some few, that possess peculiar constitutions, whose health actually improves from the peculiar exercise required by their work in the mills, and the peculiar habitudes of body, thereby induced. These persons finding the situation congenial, are those who remain here over the average time; and their answers would of course show a favorable state of health. But their number is small, compared with the whole number successively employed, here. In addition to this, it is well known that the human constitution may be sometimes so changed by continued custom, that unnatural and unhealthy habitudes of body, which at first caused much pain, may be finally endured without any sensible inconvenience. Accordingly, it is common for girls to complain of ill health within the first few months of working in the mills, and very many of them are obliged to leave within the

first year; and yet some pass through the ordeal, till they finally become accustomed to a factory life. But the health and lives of thousands, are sacrificed in this attempt to force nature into an unnatural course. With this explanation, Doctor Bartlett's last "important fact" will be readily understood.

The writer of the "Vindication," as if aware that, with his ingeniously used "facts" he had not been able to "make out his case," as a last resort, introduces a certificate of the opinion of one of the superintendents of the mills, of course not an uninterested witness, as to the health of the factory operatives. He says:—"So far as my own observations have extended, I am induced to believe that six hundred females out of a thousand enjoy better health in the mills, than they would in any employment, *requiring the same hours of labor each day.*" Now this may be true. But where can a large class of females be found, who labor unremittingly, so many hours as do factory operatives in our mills? I do not believe there is upon the face of the earth, any large class of persons—men, women, or children—bond or free, that labor incessantly for so many hours each day, as do the factory operatives of New England. This statement therefore may be true, and yet it does not in one iota, contradict the charge that loss of health is consequent upon working in the mills. The too great number of hours, during which the factory operatives are required to labor, being the *most important evil*, to which they are subjected.

The eloquent, and withal complacent flourish, with which the writer closes his relation of facts, is worthy of notice. He says,

"I could easily extend these data, and with the same gratifying results; but it is, certainly unnecessary. They constitute an unanswerable refutation of the wild and unsupported assertions contained in the Times. There they are—simple, clear, intelligible, stubborn, unyielding facts, which no sophistry can uproot or destroy—which no empty wind of declamation can overthrow."

That he has dealt generally in facts is very true. The sophistry and ingenuity of his arguments, consist in his not always telling the *whole truth*. He certainly need not fear any attempt to destroy or overthrow the *facts he advances*. The only difficulty he will meet with, is, that they are too "stubborn" and too "unyielding" when fully explained.

The writer of the "Vindication" having thus far, in his investigation in relation to the health of factory operatives, confined himself mostly to facts, before leaving the subject, ventures a little upon "mere opinion and the results of individual observation." Some

of his statements in this connexion, I wish the reader to remember. He makes the assertion that the "manufacturing population of this city is the healthiest portion of the population;" because, among other reasons which he mentions, "they are regular in their habits. They are early up in the morning, and early to bed at night. Their fare is plain, substantial and good."

He then proceeds to anticipate the following inquiries, that would naturally arise in the minds of the community, after reading so flattering a description of the condition and health of the factory operatives.

"Is the physical condition then, I shall probably be asked, of these seven thousand females, so good, that there is nothing to be complained of, and no improvement to be wished or desired, or attempted? Is there no ill health among them? Are there no causes of disease connected with their situation and occupation? Far be it from me to pretend that every thing is so satisfactory."

Now open your ears and listen to the *Vindication* of the females employed in the mills! Hear their *Defence* by this, their valiant and chivalrous advocate—this philanthropic and unbought volunteer, in whose "*free spirit the corporations have no property.*" He says,

"The bodily health, and the habits, so far as these have a bearing on the health of the entire female population of the country is far enough from being what it should be. As it is elsewhere so it is here. I wish a more *rational and healthy*—not a more luxurious or expensive system, of diet was generally adopted, as well in the splendid dining halls of Boston and New York as in the boarding-houses of Lowell and Dover."

We see in this nothing but a kind of thrust at the folly of the girls themselves, and a lesson in economy to the boarding-house keepers. But if as he before asserted, their fare be "*plain, substantial and good,*" wherein would he have a "*more rational and healthy* diet." But hear him farther,

"I wish that every girl would consult her health and comfort in providing herself with an umbrella, india rubber over-shoes, a warm cloak, woollen stockings and flannel for the winter, instead of sacrificing to her pride in the form of parasols, kid shoes, lace veils and silk stockings."

"This is the most unkindest cut of all." Could not this "*Vindicator*" and Defender—this sympathizer with the poor, abused and slandered factory girls, find any wrong on the part of the corporations of which he might complain, and for which, he might, as the friend and advocate of the operatives, demand a remedy? Could he see no evil in their being huddled together in the boarding-houses, more like brutes than human beings? None in their being allowed so short a time for their meals? None in their being obliged to labor thirteen hours per day, in a close room, in which are

from thirty to ninety persons, and in which, in the winter, lamps are burning several hours, and of course consuming the vital principle of the air they breathe? Could he discover none of the other innumerable evils of a factory life? But must he, in order to account for the ill health, he cannot with all his arguments conceal, turn upon these same poor girls, in whose defence he so generously professed to appear, and charge *them with imprudence?* Must he in order to discover the evils of the factory system, so far outrage decency, as to pry into the wardrobes of the factory girls, and inquisitively examine their clothes, and then publicly censure them, because they do not always wear india rubber shoes, woolen stockings and flannel petticoats; instead of *presuming*, in imitation of the fashionable females of the wealthy classes, to have "parasols, kid shoes, lace veils and silk stockings?" Such a gallant and delicate *defence* of the operatives does honor to the talented and *disinterested* author, Dr. Bartlett, and must be duly appreciated and gratefully remembered by the "cruelly slandered" females, in behalf of whom he, in this pamphlet so generously appears before the public.

But he does finally discover that there is *one* evil to be complained of, for which neither the operatives nor the boarding-house keepers are censurable. This is the too great number of hours devoted to labor. The number *he says* "now averages within a few minutes of twelve." But the time of actual labor, does in fact average nearer thirteen, than twelve hours. This is an evil so outrageous and withal so palpable and glaring, that he could not pass it over in silence. For had he not noticed it, this professed "*Vindication*" of the *females* employed in the mills, would have borne *too plainly* the appearance of a *defence* of the *corporations*. But he manages this evil very adroitly. He says that *custom* throughout the manufacturing establishments of New England has fixed the hours of labor, and "any change in this matter must be common to them all." In this manner he exculpates the poor, innocent corporations here, from the responsibility of this evil, not taking the trouble to state, what is the fact, that this being the leading manufacturing place in New England, the corporations here were chiefly instrumental in establishing the "*custom*."

The writer expresses the strongest confidence that the "progress of intelligence, justice and philanthropy, and the tendencies of labor-saving machinery, will in due season lead to the abridgement of the hours of labor." But any one who has been a resident of Lowell, "as long as Doctor Bartlett has, and has attentively observed the

course of events in relation to this matter, must ere this have come to the conclusion that such a result must be looked for, from some other source than the "justice and philanthropy" of the employers, the corporations. How much may be expected from that source, some facts will show. Several years ago, a petition to the agents, was got up and signed by all or nearly all the overseers in the mills, requesting that the condition of the operatives might be ameliorated, by allowing them to come out of the mills for breakfast in the winter. To this end, representations were made of the evils resulting from the present system, and the opinions of physicians introduced, that getting up so early in the morning, and immediately eating their breakfasts, without having taken any exercise, is in a great degree detrimental to health. The agents made a frivolous excuse, that the request was received too late, to be duly considered that season, and pacified the petitioners with an aequiescence in the necessity of the reform asked for, and a promise that it should be attended to, as soon as the matter could be brought before the stockholders. But several years have now elapsed, and as might have been expected, the reform asked for, has not been granted, nor has any thing been done towards effecting so philanthropic an object.—"Justice and philanthropy" had no part in building up these manufacturing establishments. So far are the corporations from listening to the voice of suffering humanity—so far from regarding the demands of "justice and philanthropy"—so far from relinquishing one farthing of the profits, arising from the over-taxed energies of the operatives, that, instead of abridging the hours of labor, they have been, by degrees, adding to them, year after year and week after week, minute by minute, and second by second, till they now run the mills at least fifteen minutes per day longer, than they did twelve years ago. Will they stop here in their avaricious and ever-increasing demands upon the labor of the operatives?—Let the hollow moan, that comes across the Atlantic from England's starving millions of over-worked victims of the factory system, answer. The demand upon the labor and time of the operatives, will still be more! more! until arrested by extending to them legislative protection. In the absence of legislation, this as well as the other evils of the factory system, will never be remedied till the operatives shall *know and feel* their individual rights, and demand them; and till the old maxim shall be revived, that has been too long forgotten, in the dealings between individuals and powerful corporations—that "it takes two to make a bargain."

The writer of the "Vindication" meets the objections that has been urged against the factory system—that there is gradually accumulating a permanent, factory population, deteriorated in body and dependent upon the mills, with the broad assertion that no such a class exists here. That there is no class of operatives in our mills, that have become, at this early day of the manufacturing enterprise in this country, so miserably degraded as are the operatives of England, is very true; and certainly it cannot be expected that there should be. But that a class, possessing to a considerable degree such a character, has already accumulated is but too apparent. And this class is daily increasing in numbers and decreasing in character. There are many females here, whose constitutions have perhaps become accustomed to a factory life, and who, for a long time having neglected all other, and especially all domestic employments, have acquired an unnatural distaste for any other occupation. They know nothing else, and can do nothing else, but "work in the factory;" and they scarcely aspire to, or *think* of any thing else. These are the operatives who "have been here longest," and who constitute, to the corporations, the best and most useful if not the "most independent and respectable" portion of the operatives. We would say nothing of the character of these persons; they may be moral, saving and industrious. They may be good and profitable *operatives* for the corporations,—but are they in the proper female sphere? Do they hold, or are they preparing to attain to that station in society, for which God designed woman? Far from it—they have become totally unfitted for the peculiar responsibilities and duties of that station in life, that is and *should be* the object of the aspirations of every virtuous female. And for them, there is but a faint ray of hope, that breaks in upon the long vista of coming years. They are factory girls—and factory girls they must live—and factory girls they must die. And, that these classes may not in time become as miserable and degraded as are the factory operatives of England, the operatives themselves must watch that they be not deceived and flattered, to forego their rights and suffer evil without complaint, that the stockholders may live in more splendor and idleness;—and the voice of every patriot and philanthropist should demand, that the evils of the operatives' present condition be ameliorated, and that they be protected from the never satisfied oppression of accumulated power and over-reaching avarice.

The remarks of Doctor Bartlett, upon the care that is here taken of the sick, it is hardly necessary that we should notice. Even had

he not made known the benevolent charities of our citizens, it certainly would never have been supposed, that the people of this christian community, are so much worse than savages, as not to extend to the sick and suffering, the kind offices of human sympathy. But with all the kindness and charity, that may naturally be expected, it is apparent that in the crowded and inconvenient factory boarding-houses, the sick *cannot* have that care and attention, they require. And the Hospital, which he so particularly mentions, the necessity for which, is alone created by the penurious and insufficient accommodations of the boarding-houses, is but a poor substitute for the friends and comforts of home.

Doctor Bartlett next and lastly comes to the consideration of the intellectual and moral condition of the factory girls. The facts he introduces in relation to this branch of the subject, and the deductions he draws therefrom are as partial, and as unsatisfactory and specious as are the other points of the "Vindication."

Facts having a bearing upon this point, of a contradictory and directly opposing character could be introduced in abundance. Some of the girls that come here to work in the mills, undoubtedly improve in morals and intelligence, and some deteriorate. Cases could be cited indefinitely, of high moral character, and miserably degraded immorality; of great proficiency and advancement in knowledge, and of continual slavery to ignorance. But in order to ascertain by this means, whether there be more good or evil promoted among the factory population by the peculiar influences to which they are exposed, the morals of every individual must be weighed and measured, and carefully compared with their character before coming here, and the balance accurately cast. But this, of course cannot be done.

Doctor Bartlett makes such a statement of facts as would *seem* to show that the moral character of the factory girls, stands higher than that of the inhabitants of the country, or of the commercial cities; and that the influences by which they are surrounded, are highly favorable to morality and virtue.

But my opinion does not coincide with the conclusion to which he, from his *partial view* of the subject, arrives, and I think all *close* and *impartial* observers, who have turned their attention to the subject, have formed the same opinion as myself. I do not wish nor do I deem it necessary, in order to prove my opinion to be correct, to go down into the depths of infamy, and bring to light a long array of the soul-sickening details of vice and immorality. Nor this is

course expedient; if it were, facts in abundance, and *startling facts* too are not wanting. But I forbear; for I would much rather throw around the poor victims who are sacrificed to the circumstances attendant upon the factory system, the mantle of charity, to shield them from public notoriety and scorn. Moreover this kind of evidence might be apparently rebutted by an opposing array of virtue, which indeed might be much easier brought forward; for virtue needs no concealment,—while vice must hide its unseemly head from the public gaze, and wrap around its odious deformity, the garb and appearance of virtue. Especially is this the case among factory operatives, on account of the boasted strict “regulations” of the manufacturing establishments, the effect of which, is not to deter the vicious from coming here, and mingling with the innocent and unsuspecting, but to induce vice and immorality to assume a more artful disguise; therefore being more dangerously contaminating, than in the more public sinks of infamy of the commercial cities.

I have already stated truly and impartially the situation of factory operatives, and explained the nature of the influences affecting their condition. And now instead of relying upon contradictory and limited details to show the state of morality and virtue among them, I would appeal to the intelligence and experience of the community to decide, whether, in the circumstances in which they are placed,—away from their homes, and removed from the watchful care and wholesome restraints of parental love, they are so favorably situated in regard to morality and virtue, as they would be at home, among the moral and intelligent farming population of New England.

But Doctor Bartlett says, that in leaving their homes, they are removed from bad influences to “those of the most active and excellent character.” To test the truth of this statement, we would put the question to him, and to every man, at all conversant with the condition of a factory population—whether he would choose to have his daughters subjected to the condition of the factory girls, rather than brought up and educated amidst the “*bad influences*” of a country neighborhood? Although there are those that *talk finely* about the moral and intellectual condition of the factory girls, being so much better than that of girls in the country, yet it is well known, that should a son of one of the stockholders form an alliance with the daughter of a farmer, it would be said that he had made a judicious selection for a wife, but he would be pointed at

with scorn, as having disgraced the "family" and tarnished the escutcheon of its dignity if he should marry that same farmer's daughter, had she by her honorable exertions and honest labor, acquired the stigma, of "a factory girl."

To disprove what every day's experience is most clearly showing, and what every man's reason, with ordinary knowledge of human nature, must teach him as to the effect of the evils of the factory system upon the morals of the operatives, Doctor Bartlett's main reliance is placed upon a statement of the results of the religious influences that are brought to bear upon them. And he seems to find in the fact, that there have been great accessions to the churches, and that nearly one third of the population of Lowell are connected with the Sabbath schools, a complete and satisfactory refutation of all charges derogatory to the moral character of the operatives. But this fact, is not conclusive evidence of the high moral character of factory operatives, *as a class*. That there are many very good and pious girls among them, I do not doubt. But that the number of meeting houses, or the number of persons connected with the churches, make a safe rule, by which to judge of the moral character of the inhabitants of a place, experience has not proved to be true. Zeal rather than piety too often becomes the guide of professed followers of Jesus. And this I believe to be the character of the religion of many of the converts in this city. The effect of such religion upon the moral character, is any thing but beneficial.

The operatives have no time to devote to moral, religious, or intellectual instruction, (save indeed the Sabbath,) and they have in the crowded boarding-houses no opportunity for reflection. The change then, that is represented to have taken place in these girls, cannot be the result of calm meditation and an enlightened understanding as to the nature and importance of the doctrines taught by Christ, which alone gives permanence to the moral effect of religion as shown in the *lives* of professors.

That the wild-fire of fanaticism should run through a population like that of Lowell, where are some eight thousand girls, who are here congregated together without protectors and without advisers, is not at all strange. And it is by means of this that so many are added to the churches in this city, of those who are urged through fear, rather than by convinced understandings, to do—they know not what. The natural excitability of the female mind is well understood here, and every advantage is taken to alarm their fears and

drive them by force into what is called the kingdom of heaven. For this purpose a continual excitement is kept up, day after day, and month after month—and in fact all the time. The girls are confined about their employment about fifteen hours of the day and evening, and consequently cannot give their attention to religious matters till after they have left off work in the night. Meetings are accordingly held in the night, and continued till ten or eleven o'clock, and sometimes till midnight. These night excitement meetings are not without their intended effect, and proselytes are of course added to the churches. But the effect of such plans and operations for promoting the Gospel, upon the morals and health of the girls cannot be altogether beneficial. The morality of females would be better promoted by calm reflection at home, than by going out in the night unprotected, to attend exciting religious meetings; and their health would be better preserved by necessary repose.

Doctor Bartlett having, by showing the number of the factory girls who have joined the churches, proved apparently to his own satisfaction, that they, as a class improve in morality by their residence here, proceeds to show the favorable influences that have effected such a result.

In the first place he mentions the “example and watchful care and oversight of the boarding-house keepers.” But this certainly cannot be very efficient. A woman, whose time and attention are required to provide for from forty to fifty boarders, cannot have much time to overlook their conduct, and see that they always conform to the rules of propriety, nor can she exercise, with much effect, a salutary influence over their morals.

He refers also to the regulations of the corporations, by which all persons guilty of any improper conduct are discharged from the mills. But these regulations are not effectual in keeping out all such persons. For notwithstanding the rules, it is well known that many vicious persons *are employed* in the mills, and it is very seldom that any one is discharged on that account. Those who are vicious, carefully conceal all appearance of impropriety, and where there is a short supply of hands, the corporations are not over-scrupulous in examining into such matters, unless the evil be so notorious as to attract public attention.

He also places much reliance upon the censorship of the girls themselves. They, as he says, demand the discharge of all suspected persons. But this is ineffectual except to induce a more artful concealment of whatever immorality may be practiced, and thus

render the contaminating influence of vicious persons more dangerous to the artless and inexperienced girls, who are lured here chiefly by the hope of accumulating money.

To the moral and religious influences that are exercised upon the factory population, through the instrumentality of the clergymen, together with the effect of the Sabbath Schools, &c., he attributes much importance in sustaining the moral character of the females. I would say nothing to disparage the good effects of any truly moral and religious influences upon the character of these individuals, but I think the religious influences that are here exercised, however beneficial they may be, are but a poor substitute for the wholesome counsels and correct moral examples of their friends at home, who would have a much nearer interest in their welfare, than any friends they may here find as substitutes. The religious operations here, may show more activity, and more apparent fervor; and there may be more religious meetings, more prayers—and longer and louder ones; but I think there is much less practical morality, less good will one toward another, and less christian benevolence, than exists among the inhabitants of the peaceful villages of the country.

Among the causes affecting the morals of the operatives, Doctor Bartlett next mentions, the high price they receive for their labor. He says, "all other things being equal, a well-paid female population will be more virtuous than an ill paid one." This is true. It is also true, that the wages of the females employed in the factories, are considerably higher than the average wages of the same kind of persons in other employments. It remains to be seen then, whether with respect to the factory girls "*all other things are equal.*"

To prove that they are not, and that the condition of the factory operatives is not so desirable as he represents, I have merely to refer to the fact that they *are paid* higher wages than they can receive elsewhere. No one supposes that the operatives are paid any thing more than is sufficient to secure their services. The corporations never pay their hands any thing, purely from disinterested benevolence. They never pay them one cent more than they are obliged to; and they have taken advantage of every opportunity to cut down their wages. Now, if the situation of girls at work in the factories is so much better than that of girls in the country in other employments, and if it be more favorable for their advancement in morality and intelligence, and more beneficial to health,—why are the corporations *obliged* to pay higher wages, than girls receive

in other employments, in order to obtain a sufficient number of hands? It would seem that superior advantages for religious, moral and intellectual improvement, and for the preservation of health, together with, as he hereafter attempts to prove, an increased prospect of marriage, would be sufficient inducements for girls to come here, in hope of bettering their condition in life, without the super-added inducement of high pecuniary compensation. But all the *favorable* circumstances, as they are really found to exist here, are not sufficient to induce all who come, to stay. There being a very large number, who leave the mills after working a few weeks or months — just long enough to become fairly acquainted with the *advantages* of their situation. I have obtained some facts upon this point; one of which I will here introduce, as showing in some measure, whether the condition of the factory girls is so altogether satisfactory to them. From one room, where the average number of girls employed is 40, there left the mill during the year ending in August, 52 girls; and my informant says, that a large proportion of these had worked in the factory but a few months. This fact will show whether the "other things" are satisfactory to the girls, who are of course the best judges.

But this talk about high wages is after all but a *deceptive lure* to tempt the girls to leave their homes in the country to work in the factories. For although their wages are higher than they can obtain in most other employments, by far the greater part of them find after from one to five years unremitting toil, that they have saved no more, and many of them not so much from their high wages, as they would have done in the country, from low wages; and somehow or other, they are not so well off, as at the time they commenced work in the mills, they anticipated they should be.

The wealth of persons may be more properly estimated by what they want, than by what they have. They who have but little, and want no more than their small means can furnish, are in fact far richer than they, who have much, but whose wants are far beyond their means of gratification. The truth of this proposition is exemplified in the pecuniary circumstances of the girls that have worked in the mills. The desire to conform as much as possible to the manners, customs and fashions of those among whom they are, is natural to all and especially to females. The girls are here surrounded by influences and temptations, which induce them to spend much of their earnings for purposes not necessary or useful,—but to enable them to appear in the same dress and fashion as others.

These temptations they generally cannot or do not resist, and in the end find themselves no richer for their high wages. They have received more money it is true,—*and they have worked more hours to obtain it*; but they have spent it in furnishing themselves with gewgaws and finery, in imitation of the fashionable of the wealthy classes, who, they are flatteringly told, are their equals, but with whom, they can find no real equality, save in the outside show and appearance, which they are enabled to put on, by the sacrifice of their hard-earned wages.

It may be said, it is not necessary that they should thus spend their money—that it is voluntary with them—that they do what they please with their money. True—but we are viewing things as they are—not as they might be. Our object is, to ascertain to what extent the moral condition of the factory girls *is improved*, by the high wages they receive. If they spend their money for such purposes as are of no real benefit to them, they are no better off than if they worked for small wages. And how much better are they morally, intellectually or physically, for dressing in silks, and useless finery, than they would have been in the simple, home-spun dress of the country?

Another method, by which the earnings of the factory girls are appropriated to other purposes than their own benefit, is by contributions that are levied upon them for religious and charitable purposes. The natural kindness and benevolence of the female heart is well known. And this trait in their character—this “very kindness of their nature” is, I think but too often imposed upon, by the clergy and others interested, by repeated appeals to their sympathies. There are in this city some *fifteen* meeting houses, a large share of the money to build which, has been drawn from the hard earnings of the factory girls. And in some cases, money has been filched from these poor girls by gross *wrong and injustice*, to build a temple for the worship of the Spirit of eternal Truth and Justice: As a proof of the moral and religious character of the people of Lowell, Mr. Case in his “Sketch of Lowell” states that the religious societies “raise at least \$40,000 per annum, for parochial and charitable purposes.” And it has been stated that the sum of \$15-00, was contributed for the Missionary cause in one day, by one denomination of christians in this city. When it is remembered that a large proportion of this money is contributed by the factory girls, it will be seen that their earnings must be considerably decreased by this tax upon their charity. Besides this, occasionally a lazy

parson, who is already receiving \$1000 or \$1200 salary, must be furnished with a cloak, or his wife must be furnished with a silk dress, at the expense of these same girls, who labor for their money some thirteen hours per day.

And what do they get in return for all this charity? A lesson of patience and humility from the clergy. They are instructed to be content, and not murmur at their lot;—they are told that it is their duty to learn to suffer; and they are deterred from complaining of the evils and the injustice they suffer in the life that now is, by being led to contemplate the terrors of the life that is to come. And they are taught to forego the enjoyment of those things, that constitute the *rights of humanity* here, by the promise of being compensated by greater bliss hereafter. By such teachings, the clergy render much service to the corporations; inasmuch as the operatives are thereby induced to remain, humble and contented under continued oppression. But they, while lost in the dreaming contemplations of bliss in the *unknown future*, forget that God has constituted man to *enjoy happiness here*, by conforming to the laws of his nature and by developing all his faculties; and they overlook the realities of the world in which we now live, in anticipations of that world, which “eye hath not seen, and of which, it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive.”

I am aware that many of the girls save their wages, or use their money for some purpose, beneficial to themselves or their friends. But I believe, that, by far the larger part of them spend all or nearly all their earnings as fast as they obtain them. The facts, Doctor Bartlett introduces to show that they save their money, are far from satisfying me, that his conclusions are correct. The facts, he gives in this connection, are derived from the statement of the Treasurer of the Lowell Institution for Savings—probably the best data, from which to form an opinion concerning this matter. The statement is as follows:

“The whole number of depositors in this Institution on the 23d July [1839.] was nineteen hundred and seventy-six; the whole amount of deposits was \$305,796 75. Of these depositors *nine hundred and seventy-eight are factory girls*, and the amount of their funds now in the bank, is estimated by Mr. Carney, in round numbers, at *one hundred thousand dollars.*”

At the time of this statement, there were about *seven thousand* girls employed in the mills in Lowell. And we find of this number less than *one thousand*, who had anything deposited in the Savings’ Bank; and the average amount of *their* deposits was within a few cents of one hundred dollars each.

I know that this does not comprehend all the money saved, nor all the girls who save their money. But *by* far the larger part of those, who lay up their earnings, deposite in the Savings' Bank. Making then reasonable allowance for such as apply their savings in some other manner, this statement does not show a very favorable account of the accumulation of money by the factory girls. Let us look at the statement again. There were *seven thousand girls*, whose average time of having worked in the mills, was *more than three years*, and out of this number, there were less than *one thousand* and these were they, who were probably the best off too, who by three years unremitting toil for thirteen hours per day, were enabled to lay up the paltry sum of *one hundred dollars*.

Of the pecuniary circumstances of the other six thousand, we have no means of ascertaining correctly. But it is a fair presumption, that if they save any considerable portion of their wages, they would deposite it in the Savings' Bank, that being the safest and most profitable investment to which they can apply their small, and gradually accumulating sums. The statement, that it is a common thing for one of the girls to have five hundred dollars in deposite, may be true. But I think such cases are very rare, when compared with the whole number of girls employed in the mills. Were it not so, it seems to me that the ingenious writer of the "Vindication" would, (as he might very easily) have ascertained, and made known the number of factory girls, who had in deposite "*five hundred dollars.*" But as he did not do this, I conclude that this matter would not have sounded so loud in the form of a statistical fact, as in the broad assertion in which it appears.

Doctor Bartlett next and lastly proceeds to consider the factory girls' chances of marriage, as one of the causes affecting the question of their moral condition. His labors upon this part of the subject, when his facts and arguments are carefully examined, show conclusively the real design of the publication of this "Vindication," —the object of which undoubtedly was to induce girls to come here, and to flatter those already here, to remain, by showing their condition and situation in the most favorable light. He takes advantage of the fact that a strong desire of marriage is common to all virtuous females, well knowing, that if they can be convinced, that the chances are better here than anywhere else, for the consummation of this very proper wish, the strongest possible motive is presented to them to leave all other places and employments and come to the factories.

Marriage is the proper state of man—it is adapted to his nature—

and it is a state to which all have a right, and to which all should aspire. And the more favorable the state of society is for the early formation of this social relation, the better is it for the morals, health and general well-being of the community. The desire to marry, that so universally exists in the minds of virtuous females, is highly honorable to them, and excercises over their moral deportment, a very powerful and beneficial influence; and the prospect of a speedy marriage is the strongest and surest safeguard, that can possibly be thrown around them to preserve their moral purity. Could the state of society be so improved, (as it should be,) that all persons, might be placed in suitable circumstances for the consummation of this object in early life, so that marriage should become an absolute certainty to all, prostitution with all the loathsome details of its tremendous consequences would be unknown.

The situation of the factory girls in Lowell, is very unfavorable to their prospects of marriage; and there is no person of common sense, but must *know* this to be a fact, who is at all conversant with the state of things in a factory community, or who will but glance at the circumstances in which factory girls are placed, and the peculiar character of a factory population, especially in relation to age and sex.

According to the Census of 1840, the number of males in Lowell, between the ages of 15 and 40 years, was 4060—the number of females of the same age was 9,513, being considerably more than two females to one male. This great disparity in numbers between the two sexes, must of course very much diminish the females' chances of marriage; for as an equal number of males and females are required for all marriages, it is morally certain that by far, more than half of the females here cannot obtain husbands from among the community in which they are living, even if all the males were disposed to marry; and their opportunities are very few for intercourse with society elsewhere, whereby such connexions may be formed with persons in other places. These facts if not concealed and glossed over by partial and specious statements, would of course have much effect in detering girls from coming here and joining, and taking their chance with, the number of those, who are condemned to almost utter hopelessness in this respect. Therefore Doctor Bartlett undertakes to show, that the circumstances in which the factory girls are placed, do not diminish their chances of marriage. In relation to the effect of the accumulation of so many females here, upon their prospects of marriage, he says:—

“It is not easy to see how this circumstance can diminish the number

of young men in New England, annually married, and if it does not do this, it cannot very well diminish the number of young women."

But it seems to me that this circumstance, together with others connected with the condition of the factory girls, *does diminish* the number of marriages among the young men of New England. Certain it is, that females after working two or three years in the mills, are not generally so well fitted to discharge the responsible duties incumbent upon them as wives, as they would have been, if engaged in most other occupations. Especially is this true in relation to domestic employments. These, they are obliged, from the nature of their situation to abandon entirely, and being unaccustomed to the performance of such duties, they soon become incapable of managing household affairs, which constitute the appropriate duties and chief accomplishments of the good housewife. Young men, if they exercise proper discretion, will remain unmarried, rather than marry those, who have become incompetent to discharge the duties incumbent on them as wives. Thus it is, that the number of marriages is diminished by so many females, lured by the deceptive hope of accumulating more money, leaving those situations and employments in which they would become fitted for the honorable station to which they should aspire, and submitting to the slavery of a factory life.

The writer further remarks that "very many of these girls find homes and husbands here—and better ones too, than they would have found at home." It is true, that some get married here, and where there are so many marriageable persons it *would be strange* if there were not some marriages. But the number of such, compared with the whole number of girls employed here, is very small. And this *must be so* from the fact that there are comparatively but a very few men here to marry them. Of those engaged in other employments out of the mills, there are at least as many females as males, so that those men are not dependent upon the factory population for wives, and although inter-marriages occasionally take place between them and the factory girls, the chances to each female, of such an occurrence are not very encouraging. And what can be their chance of marriage with persons in the factories, where there are more than three females to one male, and of the number of males employed in the mills, more than half are boys, or persons not of suitable age or condition in life to marry?

Aware of the fact, that but a small portion of the girls employed in the factories can find husbands here, he further says:—"Oth-

ers find homes and husbands in the country, for which they are indebted to the improvement in their character, manners and condition resulting from their residence here." This assertion can but excite a smile of contempt, for the obsequious writer, from those who know any thing of the condition of factory operatives. A factory would be the last place in the world to which a father would send his daughter, to be instructed in those things which would make her desirable for a wife; and to compel her to labor incessantly in a factory thirteen hours per day, and to be subjected to all the other evils that factory girls suffer, would be a strange regimen to improve her "*character, manners and condition.*" This idea is an entirely original one with Doctor Bartlett:—no one ever before having *dreamt* of the girls experiencing so favorable a result from the factory system. But the girls have generally thought themselves fortunate, if during their factory life, they have not so much retrograded in their physical and moral condition as to cause the breaking up of the strong attachments of early youth.

To show that the factory girls' chances of marriage are not less than those of females in other situations in life. Doctor Bartlett introduces a comparison between the number of marriages in Lowell and Portsmouth, N. H.; and gives the following statistics :—

"The population of Portsmouth, in 1835, was nearly 9,000: and the number of marriages was 101, making one marriage to about 89 individuals.—The number of publishments recorded in the City of Lowell between the 1st of April, 1838, and the 1st of April, 1839, was 288, and of this number 38 only of the females belonged in other towns. This would give us about 250 marriages, and with a population of nearly 20,000, we should have one marriage to less than 80 individuals, making a very considerable difference in our favor."

These facts would seem to show that the chances for marriage are better in Lowell than in Portsmouth. But is it not a singular circumstance that Doctor Bartlett should go so far as Portsmouth for statistics, by which to compare Lowell, both in relation to the number of deaths and the number of marriages? Why did he not make the comparison with some of the farming towns in the vicinity, where it would seem, he might have obtained the statistical facts in relation to this matter with much less trouble than by going some fifty miles, to a place out of the state? A comparison with some of these towns in which the factory girls formerly resided, would have been much fairer than a comparison with Portsmouth, the population of which differs essentially

in character from that of Lowell, or of any considerable portion of New England.

In order to understand this matter properly, it is necessary that we should take into consideration the peculiar characteristics of each place, there being many circumstances that have an important bearing upon the number of marriages that may take place, as compared with the population.

Those places in which marriages are most frequent, are those, which are increasing most rapidly in population and in permanent business. To such places, young men, who are just commencing in business, go to settle for life, that they may grow up in wealth and influence with the growth of the place. At such times and under such circumstances, they also usually marry. How do Lowell and Portsmouth compare in this respect?

Portsmouth is an old place, whose business is gradually on the wane, and the population of which is annually decreasing. Its population in 1830 was 8,082,—in 1840,—7,834,—showing a decrease of 248 in 10 years. The situation of affairs in such a place is not favorable for the contracting of marriages. The persons that remain, are generally those, settled down in life and who already have families. The young men, who are just ready to launch out into the world for themselves, and who are of that age at which persons do usually marry, and in that condition in life, the most favorable for entering upon the marriage relation, prefer to take up their residence in some more flourishing and increasing place, where the activity of business is more congenial to the hopes and buoyancy of youth.

On the other hand, Lowell is a place that has grown up within a few years, as if called forth from the wilderness by the touch of magic. Its population in 1830 was 6,474,—in 1840 it was 20,816, showing an increase of 14,342, having more than trebled in population in ten years. It is to such places generally that young men go, and settle down and marry. And it is of such persons here congregated, that the male population of this place is composed. There are no old men here—there are comparatively but few children here. There cannot be found in the United States, two considerable places more completely opposite to each other in this respect than are Lowell and Portsmouth; and the difference in the number of marriages in proportion to the population should in the nature of things from this cause alone, be vastly in favor of the former.

But when we compare, in connexion with the number of mar-

riages, the relative ages of the inhabitants of the two places, we shall be enabled to judge more correctly of the chances of marriage of the factory girls of Lowell as compared with the chances of the females of Portsmouth. And this is the only way in which a fair comparison can be made, in order to elicit the truth in relation to this matter. For it certainly would not be fair to presume that the relative number of marriages should be the same among a population consisting of superannuated persons, in waning business circumstances, as it would be among a population of young persons just commencing a flourishing business. Let it be understood that our inquiry is, as to the chances of marriage of the *females* of Lowell, as compared with those of other places.

The facts introduced by Doctor Bartlett, show the marriages in Lowell, to be as one in 80 of the whole population, and in Portsmouth, as one in 89 of the whole population. But this is comparing the chances of the *marriageable young persons* of Lowell with the chances of the *unmarriageable old persons and children* of Portsmouth. Most all persons that marry, marry between the ages of 15 and 40, and nearly *quite* all the females are married between those ages. Let us see then, how the number of marriages compares with the number of *marriageable females* in each respective place.

For convenience in making the calculation, I take the population of 1840. I have not ascertained the number of marriages in either of the two places for that year; but take the ratio of marriage as estimated by Doctor Bartlett, and apply it to the actual population. As some years are more favorable to marriage than others, this calculation may show more or less marriages, than the actual number; but if the ratio was increased or diminished in one place, it would probably be affected in a like manner in the other. The relation of one to the other would be the same.

The population of Portsmouth for the year 1840, was 7,834. This would give, at the rate of one marriage to 89 individuals, 88 marriages. The number of females between the ages of 15 and 40 years, was 1,763, accordingly there would be one marriage to 20 persons of this description;—that is one marriage to 20 *marriageable* females. The population of Lowell for the year 1840, was 20,816; and at the rate of one marriage to 80 individuals, would give 260 marriages. The number of females between the ages of 15 and 40 years, was 9,513; this would give one

marriage to something *more than* 36 of this class of persons;—that is one marriage to nearly 37 *marriageable* females.

From this view of these facts, we can arrive at a nearly correct conclusion whether females' chances of marriage are diminished by the circumstances, in which the factory girls are here placed. We find that in Portsmouth there is one marriage to every 20 *marriageable* females, while in Lowell, there is *only one marriage to nearly 37 females* of the same ages; there being but about *half the number of marriages* to the same number of females, in Lowell as in Portsmouth, notwithstanding the latter is a place probably more unfavorable to marriage than any other, not a manufacturing place, in New England. I have made enquiries sufficient to satisfy me that the difference would be still greater, if the comparison were made between the marriages in Lowell, and those that occur among the farming population of the country. But the facts already given, are sufficient to show, that the chances of marriage of the females employed in the mills in Lowell, are nearly one half less, than the chances of the females of Portsmouth, which is, from its declining state, more unfavorable to marriage than any considerable portion of New England, among the farmers or in the commercial cities.

In this calculation, I have used Doctor Bartlett's own facts and figures, simply applying them to the population of 1840, and for the only reason, that I could not ascertain the accurate numbers of the different ages of the population in the years for which he makes his calculations. Notwithstanding these facts show so plainly and indisputably that the factory girls' chances of marriage are greatly diminished, yet Doctor Bartlett uses them so ingeniously that they *seem to show* a directly opposite result, if they be not explained by *all the facts*, which in order to make known the truth, should be shown in connexion.

In what light then, does Doctor Bartlett stand in relation to this matter, with his ingenious sophistries, his partial statements of facts, and his one-sided reasonings? His statements throughout this "Vindication" are such as would give to those unacquainted with the *real facts* in relation to things here, an entirely erroneous idea of the character and condition of the factory operatives; and they are especially deceptive in this last matter in relation to the factory girls' chances of marriage. Such an attempt to cover up the evils of the factory system, and hold out inducements for girls to come here, by exciting hopes that can

never be realized, is a most contemptible operation for any man to be engaged in, and especially one that professes so much philanthropy as does Dr. Bartlett. But perhaps he thought the fallacy of his statements, and his deceptive reasoning might be concealed, by his so often expressed sympathy for the "abused and slandered" factory girls, in whose defence he *professed* to appear. *Perhaps too* he might have been influenced to thus spread a coat of flattery over the factory girls, and at the same time attempt to conceal by a deceptive veil, the evils they suffer, by the sanguine hope of some Honorable reward for this, his *disinterested* benevolence, from those corporations, who have "*no property in his free spirit.*"

It is not necessary that I should notice the further comparison made by Doctor Bartlett, between the deaths and marriages in Lowell and Portsmouth, having already shown the fallacy of his conclusions, drawn from the comparative mortality of the two places, as to the health of the factory operatives. His whole argument, in relation to these matters, deduced with so much ingenuity from such an array of facts, is completely demolished by the recollection of the simple fact, that in Portsmouth there is an unusual proportion of the population of that age, at which persons by the course of nature are most liable to die, while in Lowell, there is quite as unusual a number, at that age in life, when persons most usually marry: With Doctor Bartlett's "*Vindication of the character and condition of the females employed in the mills*" I have done. The candid portion of the community will judge, whether it be indeed a *Vindication* of the females in the mills, or an attempt to cover up and conceal the evils to which they are subjected, and thereby shield the corporations from the condemnation of the people.

It has been my aim to expose the evils to which the factory operatives are subjected, and to point out what I believe must, in the course of nature, be their results upon their physical, intellectual and moral characters. I would now make some suggestions, with a view to the correction of the evils of which just complaint has been made. These are submitted to the community in the hope, that they may lead to the adoption of some measures for a reform so much needed.

I believe the tendency of the circumstances, in which the factory operatives are placed, is to degrade *them* as a class; and furthermore that through *them* somewhat of deterioration is diffused among the community at large, and much moral and physical evil must inevitably be entailed upon posterity. It is therefore for the well-being

of the community generally, and the welfare of the factory operatives especially, that I have pointed out the evils to which they are subjected. And I would warn them to beware, lest yet other evils be added to their condition, by the never satisfied corporations, which if unchecked, will in time reduce them to the miserable degradation of the operatives of England. I would arouse them to a sense of their danger, that they may, ere it be too late, take measures for the amelioration of their condition and for guarding their inalienable rights, not only to live, but also to *enjoy the blessings of Heaven*, from being stolen away one by one, till they shall become as mere serfs of a purse-proud aristocracy, for whose support they must labor, and to whom they must kneel and beg for the privilege to toil for their bread.

But I know that by my course in this matter, I incur the censure of very many of that class of persons, for whose welfare I herein labor. For I know by experience somewhat of human nature. The number of those is not small, who, when lulled to sleep in fancied security, and enjoying a *dream* of happiness never to be realized, while the wily serpents paid to deceive are whispering sweet flattery in their too-willing ears, complain, if an honest and true friend, foreseeing that destruction is hanging over them and just ready to burst in fury upon their heads, raise a halloo to awaken them from their slumber, and tell them of their danger. "Let us sleep on"—they murmur in their broken sleep—"disturb us not by your clamor about evils we know nothing about, and dangers we see not."

What then is the duty of the philanthropist? Shall his voice be silent, because those for whom he speaks *will* not hear? Shall he turn from and leave them to their sinking fate, because they pervert the sober truths he speaks, and laugh to scorn, him who would be their benefactor? And must the lessons of experience, taught by the miseries of those who have suffered in the old world, be lost in their effect upon the operatives in the new world, because they *will* listen to the flattery of those interested to deceive them, rather than hear the warning voice of their true friends, who would have them free from *all* thralldom? Nay—let not the philanthropist keep silence. Let him not cease to speak truth, and demand justice. Let him not relax his exertions for the rights of man. But let him put forth all his powers to arouse the people, that through the influence of the public sentiment, and by the enactment of just and equal laws, the laboring classes may be raised to that position in society, which they, by their industry and usefulness merit;—and let him boldly

assert and maintain the great truth, that is now indeed practically forgotten,—*that equality is the birth-right of man.*

But what can be done for the correction of the evils to which factory operatives are subjected, and for the amelioration of their condition? In the first place then, let this fact be instilled into the minds of the operatives in the mills, and into the minds of the whole community also, (for the interests of the *mass of the community* and the interests of the operatives are mutual,)—*that the interest of the employers is directly adverse to the interest of the employed.* This is a truth which they seem hardly to have thought of; and it would seem that the corporations in this city, if not elsewhere, have striven to give them an opposite impression. For persons employed in the mills, who are the time-serving, soul-wanting, parasitical expectants of corporations favours, are often heard whining around, without the least sign that an independent thought or feeling ever existed in their bosoms—“that the interests of the corporations and the operatives are one and the same;—that it is the *duty* of the operatives to act in all things—even to VOTE as their employers wish, and dictate.” They seem to think, that they are to be benefitted by an increase of the profits of the corporations.—But was there a case ever known, of the stockholders dividing with the operatives any portion of their increased dividends—even when those dividends have amounted to forty per cent per annum? Poor fools! can they not see, that the means, chiefly used for advancing the interests of the stockholders and augmenting their profits, is, by directly or indirectly *reducing the wages, or by adding in some way, new burdens upon the already oppressed operatives?* And can they not see, that they are in this manner used as tools, which at the dictation of the employers, are turned against their own interests?—*They are in fact made unwittingly to rivet the chains of their own slavery.*

The interest of the employers is, to obtain the *greatest* possible amount of labor for the *least* possible compensation;—the interest of the employed is, to render the *least* possible amount of labor and time for the *greatest* possible compensation. The corporations understand this matter much better than do the operatives, or the community. And to promote their own interest in opposition to the welfare of the operatives, they keep in active operation all the means, they can control by their associated wealth and monopolising charters. And in addition to the advantages, they possess by virtue of their corporate powers, the large manufacturing corporations form *combinations of Corporations*, which, acting in concert, regulate the

wages, the operatives may receive for their labor, and dictate to them by an irresistible fiat, the number of hours they shall toil.—There is no mutual acknowledgment of each others *rights*, in the dealings between these incorporated employers and those who labor for them.—The laborers are not at all consulted as to what shall be their compensation,—their right to a voice in relation to the matter is virtually denied. After having been lured here and placed in circumstances, in a measure dependent, they are imperatively told, (in fact, if not in the words) to labor thus, and for such compensation or starve.

Let it be understood then, that there is an *operatives'* interest, as well as an *employers'* interest. And when, as we have seen, the employers—the corporations, take advantage of every circumstance, and use all the means in their power, and even band together and form a "*combination of corporations*" to advance their own interests and act against the interests of the operatives, let the operatives, and all those whose interests are identical with theirs, learn a lesson from their management, and gather together and marshal themselves under the banner of the "*Operatives*," to protect their own interests and contend for their own rights. The corporations possess all the advantages of associated wealth, and the combined influence of many individuals, directed into one channel. Let all the people then, whose interests are in any manner allied to the well-being of the operatives, associate themselves together, and by the union of hearts and hands joined in the same cause, gather strength and influence that shall be effectual. In this manner, there may be created in the minds of the community a feeling sense of the wrongs suffered by the operatives, until public opinion, all resistless, shall demand that their oppression shall cease.

The condition of the ten thousand operatives of Lowell, calls a loud for reform; and this call, that goes forth from the queen city of the American manufacturing interest, is echoed back from almost every village in New England, by the many times ten thousand operatives in similar circumstances; and this again is re-echoed from the sunny vales and rocky hills, in a low moan that comes from the humble dwellings of the farmers, by the many thousands of poor victims in the prime of life, worn out in factory slavery, who have gone home to receive the last farewell of their weeping kindred and friends, and to die among the scenes of their childhood.

Let not the community turn a deaf ear to this call. But let reform be demanded at the hands of the corporations, who make large

dividends, accumulated by the sufferings of overworked humanity. Let public opinion demand that more commodious boarding-houses be provided, where the operatives may live in smaller families, so that they may be relieved from the noise and confusion, not to say anything of the immoral tendencies, arising from 40 or 50 persons being crowded into one small tenement. Let them if they choose, have at the boarding-houses an opportunity for some retirement, that they may read or write, or offer up their devotions to their God, without being interrupted by unwelcome intrusions. And let them no longer be crowded together like swine in their sleeping apartments. Let the price of board be so regulated, that it may sufficient, not only to furnish enough of wholesome food for the support of the body, but to make ample provision for cleanliness and comfort. Let them be allowed at least an hour for their meals, instead of the twenty or thirty minutes now, as it were grudgingly eeked out to them. These evils, together with many others, constitute the condition of factory operatives a most *miserable servitude*, by which their character, moral and physical, is degraded, and in consequence of which, they are considered as a kind of *inferior caste*, with whom persons claiming respectability must not associate;—and therefore they *must be reformed*.

But there is the greatest need for reform in relation to the number of hours devoted to labor. This is the greatest evil in the condition of factory operatives. Being obliged to labor from twelve to thirteen hours per day, and being under the control of the "factory bell" from fourteen to fifteen hours out of the twenty-four, is indeed slavery—and that too most abominable. Persons under such circumstances can be but *parts of human beings*; for in order to develop the whole man, they must not only labor with their hands, but must have opportunity for recreation and amusement, and must cultivate the moral and intellectual faculties. Where they are required to labor so many hours, they cannot have opportunities for these things, so necessary to man. They can only eat, sleep and work. This evil is so enormous, that even Doctor Bartlett, in his attempt to gloss over the situation of the factory operatives, although he could discover no other evil in their condition, could not pass it without a notice. For the correction of the evil, he relies upon the "progress of justice and philanthropy, and the tendencies of labor-saving machinery." But I would warn the operatives, that a reliance upon the "justice and philanthropy" of the corporations, is totally vain; for these qualities have exhibited themselves in *their*

management, by their adding to the hours of labor within the last twelve years, at least fifteen minutes per day. The only manner in which this evil can be corrected, is by legislative regulation. This must be effected by the operatives themselves, and those having an interest in their welfare,—by their sleeplessly watching their own interests, and guarding their own rights, at the ballot box. They must look to it, that legislators be elected, who will see that the *rights of man* are protected, rather than contrive by special grants and monopolies, to enrich the idle drones of society, by adding new burdens upon the poor and industrious laborers.

I propose legislative regulation of the hours of labor by factory operatives, because I can see no other way in which this tremendous and *universally admitted* evil can be corrected. I am from principle opposed to all legislative interference in relation to all matters of social intercourse between man and man, any farther than is absolutely necessary to protect the weaker in the enjoyment of their rights, unmolested by the stronger. I would have all matters of bargain and trade—and all the relations between employer and employed, left free from all interference and all regulations, except such as may arise from the "*natural laws*" of trade. Principally for these reasons, I am also opposed to all corporations, established to foster private interests and to advance private speculations. I would have no special privileges granted to any persons, unless they are necessary for the welfare of the community at large, and then only, in cases where more wealth and power is required than private enterprise can command. Whether the manufacturing corporations are necessary for the public welfare I do not intend to decide; but as I will not *here* dispute the wisdom of our legislators, I will take it for granted they are.

The legislature, in granting the special privileges conveyed by their charters, created in fact great, overgrown, *fictitious persons*, possessing more influence, and more power than does any individual—or *real person*. If some special powers be not conveyed by a charter, an act of incorporation would be entirely useless and worthless. The special powers and privileges of corporations, are asked and granted upon the plea, that the grant of power is necessary for the welfare of community—for the *public good*. But powers thus granted for the *public good*, without restriction, can be used by the recipients of such powers, for *private interests*, and for *private speculations*.

Are the powers granted to manufacturing corporations, used sole-

ly and exclusively for the *public good*? Such a supposition would be rating the persons interested in, and having the management of the corporations as something *more than men*. The manufacturing corporations take all possible advantage of the powers granted them for the *public good*, and use them for the promotion of *their own interests*. Being thus used, the powers granted professedly for the benefit of the community, are brought to bear directly *against* the interests of the greater portion of the community—those who are obliged to labor for their bread. But not content with the advantages over private individuals, which they possess by virtue of their charters, the manufacturing corporations increase still further, their influence and power, by the combinations and agreements, that openly or tacitly exist among the principal corporations throughout New England, by which they—the employers arbitrarily establish the amount of compensation, *free men and free women* shall receive for their labor, and the number of hours they shall be compelled to toil. Against the tremendous influence of these “combined corporations,” all remonstrance and appeal of the operatives are vain. After having been lured here, and placed in circumstances in a measure dependent, their voice is no more heard, as to what shall be their situation and condition, or what they shall receive for their labor, than is the voice of the negro slaves, who work under the lash of the cotton planters, or of the more unfortunate slaves that delve in the Siberian mines. Combinations of the operatives it is true are sometimes formed, to counteract the oppression of corporation influencees; but they are of no avail;—for a large portion of them spend all their wages as fast as they are permitted to earn them, and many do not save enough to enable them to live a single week without labor. They *must* labor for their bread, and for *such pay* and upon *such terms* as are offered them. They are completely at the mercy of interested, selfish, soulless corporations, and must submit to their dictation in all things, or be turned out into the world, to wander in search of some other means to provide themselves with daily bread.

Here then, we see the necessity for legislative protection to the operatives in the factories. If indeed it be indispensable to the *public good*, that great and powerful manufacturing corporations be created,—let them be chartered. But it should be remembered, that this is legislation for the special benefit of the “employers’ interest;”—that by these charters, increased powers are granted to associated wealth, that *may be and are* used adversely to the “interest of the employed.” Justice therefore demands, that the legislature, which puts power in the hands of “employers,” that they *can use* to oppress and degrade the working classes—“the employed,” should erect a barrier, to defend the operatives from the encroachments of this same *chartered power*;—and that it should throw around them the shield of the law, to guard their rights—the rights of humanity,—and protect them from being trampled in the dust, and reduced to a degrading servitude to the rich and powerful, by means of the ponderous machinery of corporations, created for the *public good*.

I ask therefore, in the name of Justice and Humanity, that factory operatives may be protected, by a law restricting the hours of labor to some number, that may be deemed consistent with the laws of nature—to some number, that will allow them an opportunity to improve their intellectual and moral faculties, without robbing their bodies of the repose nature requires. And could a reform to this effect be made in the condition of factory operatives, much would be done thereby, to relieve them from the physical and moral evils, that are now sinking them in degradation. And for laws to this effect we have in this state, a precedent in point.

Legislation in relation to the employment of factory operatives, is no new thing. A law has already been enacted in our commonwealth, by which manufacturing establishments are forbidden to employ persons under the age of fifteen, unless they attend school a certain length of time every year. Let the principles, upon which that law is based, be applied to the greater evil of over-working the physical powers of the operatives.

But there are those, that cannot or will not see any common interest between the operatives and the people at large, who will ask,—"what *right* the community have to *dictate* to us how long we shall labor?" Say they "if the operatives work fifteen hours per day, they do it voluntarily—receive their pay for it, and it is their own business."

But when we see tens of thousands of females, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, devoting fourteen or fifteen hours per day to factory servitude, and thereby neglecting their intellectual and moral faculties, by which the Creator has distinguished them from the brutes;—and when we know, that by so doing, they are not only destroying their healths, but are becoming degraded and demoralized, *here* we not a right, and is it not our duty, to protect Humanity from abuse? Many of the operatives are girls, who are excited to work by the hope of making great wages, and think not that they are in the meantime losing that, for which no money will repay them. But shall they be permitted in their heedlessness or ignorance, to sell their health, and to sacrifice the intellect and moral capacities of the human mind, for money?—But they alone do not suffer the penalties for violating the laws of their nature:—the community suffers also; and therefore has a *right, on its own account* to look to this matter. If the operatives or any portion of them deteriorate in health and morality, so as to become a burden to the community, it is right that the community should look into their condition and reform the evils, from which they suffer. But it is frequently urged, that the factory operatives stay in the mills but comparatively a short time, and then return to the community from which they came. It is thus argued, that they do not stay long enough to become much degraded in character. But let it be remembered, that their places in the mills are filled by others from the community, who are suffering the same evils, from which they have escaped. The operation of the evils does not cease by a change of operatives. And if one set of hands do not stay till they become *entirely worn out and utterly degraded*, but by a change of hands, the effects of the evils be divided among many, the whole effect upon the character of community at large, is not less, because more extensively divided. Moreover, so many of the females being called to factory labor, some of them will necessarily become mothers of posterity; and injuring, as many do irreparably, their physical con-

stitutions by over-working in the mills, they will transmit constitutional disabilities to their offspring, who will in time come forward and take the places of the present generation. Community then certainly has a right to take measures for the correction of evils so extensive in their ultimate effects. And not only has it a right, but it is called upon by the stern voice of duty to itself—duty to the oppressed and over-worked operatives, and duty to posterity yet unborn, who are to fill our places, and inherit from us the glorious liberty, for which our fathers bled;—and whose duty it will in turn become, to transmit this greatest of human blessings, unimpaired to *their* posterity forever.

But there is another reason why, all other means being ineffectual, legislation should be resorted to in relation to this matter. The hours of labor by factory operatives, should be abridged, that they may enjoy, what is by the intention of the Creator their *right*, the benefit of the *labor-saving machinery* put in operation by their hands. God created the sun to shine upon the just and the unjust. He causes the rain to fall alike upon all—the rich and the poor—and He, in his wisdom and impartial benevolence, designed labor-saving machinery for the benefit of *all* his intelligent creatures,—to assist them in providing for themselves food and raiment for the comfort of their bodies, in order to allow them more time for the cultivation of their intellectual and moral faculties.

Labor-saving machinery is not the result of any power *created* by any man. It is but the effect of the laws of matter, ordained by God, acting in the elements of his creation—air, earth, and water. If a man by combining these elements, and properly directing the natural action of one upon another, make a machine that will perform the labor of many men, he has no right to the exclusive benefit of that machine, unless he can *create* the power that keeps that machine in operation. *Power, no man can create.* It is created alone by the Almighty God—our God as well as his. And after compensating him for his toil in contriving and making the machine; all mankind have an inalienable right to share the benefits, that arise from its operation by the use of the power, created by our Father for the assistance of *all* his children.

The tremendous powers of air, steam and the waterfall, are performing work that would require the labor of millions of men. But do the millions of those that labor, labor less than they did before these powers were used to keep in operation *labor-saving machinery*? The Merrimack, that once wasted all its force and fretted away its great power in madly rushing over the craigs of the rocky channel of Pawtucket, and served but to excite the superstitious wonder of the poor Indian as he gazed upon the foam of its wrath, and fancied he heard the voice of his God—the Great Spirit, uttered in its mighty roar, is now stopped ere it uselessly plunges in its mad career, and is made to do the labor of many thousands. But are the laboring classes of New England thereby relieved in any degree from toil? The power of the Merrimack, by means of the machinery it moves, saves the labor of a *few*, that are born to wealth and influence, and adds many long hours of toil, to the burdens of those, who are doomed by necessity to labor for their bread. By its power—the power that God created for the assistance of universal man, a few of the rich, who have monopolized all its benefits, are relieved from *all* toil, and are moreover enabled to spend their time in the enjoyment of princely luxury, while those who labor, are not only obliged to toil longer than before, but compared with their employers, are, as a class, sinking day by day, to a still deeper degradation.

But such apologists for the corporations as Doctor Bartlett, comes Judas-like, in pretended friendship to the toiling thousands, and tells them that "*labor-saving machinery will abridge their hours of labor.*" But if this be ever done, it will not be done by the voluntary consent of their employ-

ers, who are enriched by the productions of labor-saving machinery. For all improvements, by which machinery is rendered more productive, adds to the motives of its owners to keep it in continual operation, and consequently to protract to the greatest possible extent, the operatives hours of labor. If a machine be so improved, that it produces ten times the amount of profit to the owner, his motives will be increased ten fold, to compel if he can, the operative who tends that machine, to labor more hours. We consequently see, that in New England, where *labor-saving machinery* has been brought to the greatest perfection, the operatives in the factories work more hours, than do the laboring classes of any portion of the known world.

This is what *labor-saving machinery has done*. If it shall ever abridge the hours of labor, it must be in obedience to the voice of the *operatives* themselves, united with the voices of the laboring classes in all useful occupations in society, who constitute the mass of the community, and whose interests are the same as their interests,—who are bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh. This voice, in order to be effectual, must go forth from souls that *feel* the wrongs they suffer—from souls that are *conscious* of the chains that bind them in slavery, and of oppression, that is crushing them in the dust. It must be the voice of men awakened from the lethargy in which they have been dreaming of freedom—of men determined to obtain *that liberty*, with but the *shadows* of which, they have been beguiled. It must be a voice, that shall fearlessly thunder forth the condemnation of the oppressor, and demand as a *right*, that the operatives shall share the benefits of labor-saving machinery, a blessing the Creator designed for *all* his children.

Thus much have I written for the benefit of the "Operatives in the mills," a numerous and increasing class in New England, who are subjected to great evils by those, who grow rich by *their toil and sweat*,—evils, that will, if not speedily corrected, reduce them to abject degradation. I have exposed the wrongs they suffer, in order that their condition may be ameliorated, by the voice of an intelligent community. I have expressed myself in the language of truth—fearlessly and plainly. And I lay these my statements and opinions before the public, not with the high sanction of great names and honorable titles. I ask for them the careful attention of all, and that they be judged by thier intrinsic merits alone. If they bear the impress of truth and candor, I ask of the community, which is certainly deeply interested in the matter, to examine into the condition of factory operatives and see if these things be so. From the operatives, I expect no favorable reception of my message, that tells them, they are not in a situation that commands the respect that belongs to all. If they spurn my efforts for their true welfare, I care not—I am alike indifferent to smiles or frowns. Had I sought the popular favor, flattery would have bought it. I have discharged a duty that weighed upon me, and that called forth the words I have written: If any shall be aroused by them to a realizing sense of the wrongs I have exposed, and exert their influence for a reform, I shall be amply rewarded for my labor. But if they fall unheeded and unheard, I bear a proud consciousness of right, that outweighs all considerations—a consciousness that I have delivered my message for Equality, for Justice, and the rights of Humanity.

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